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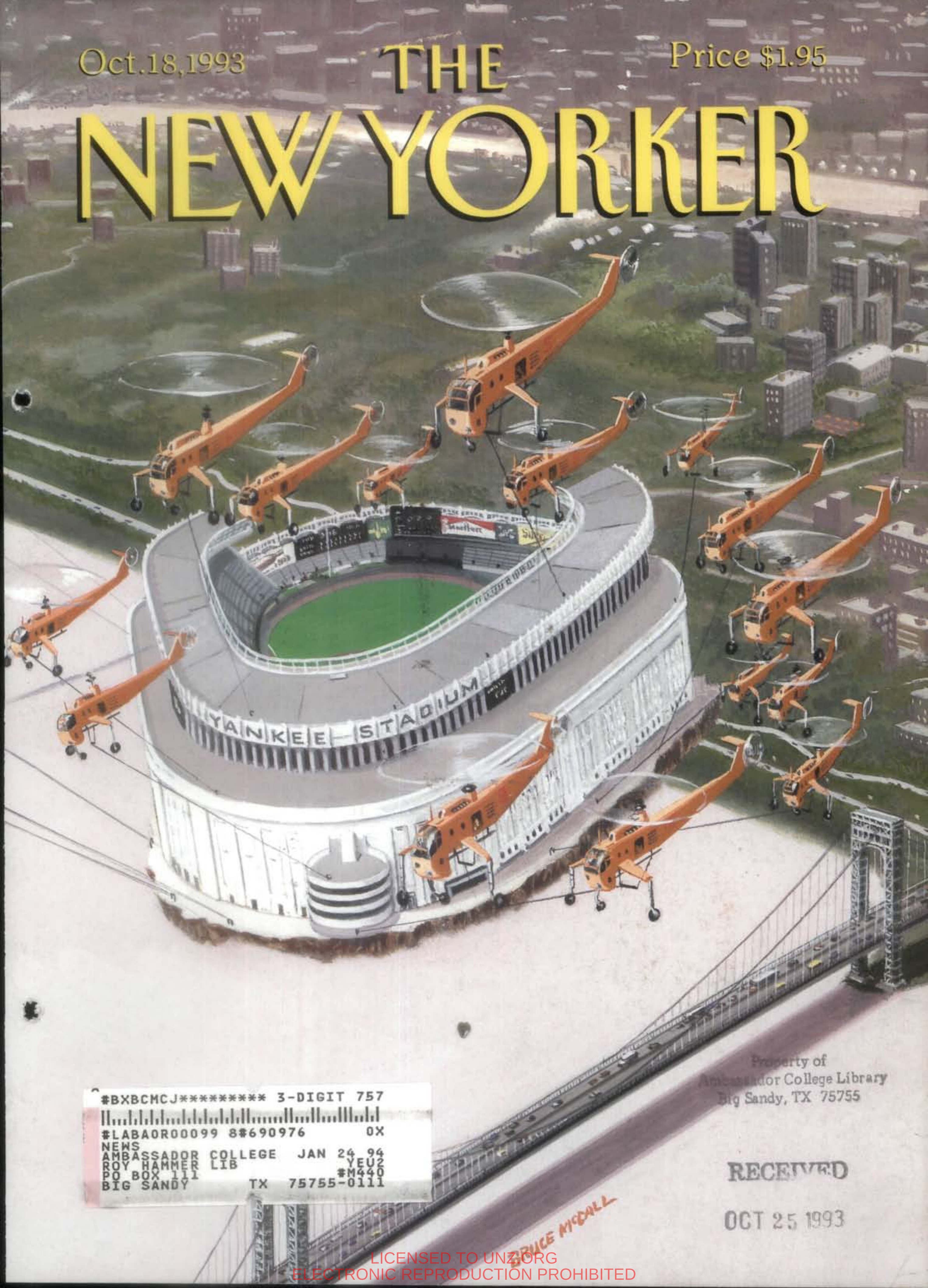

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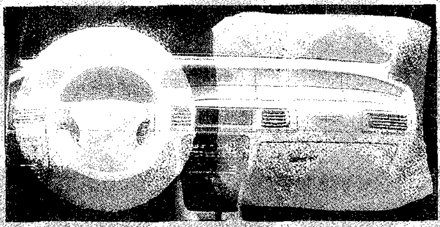

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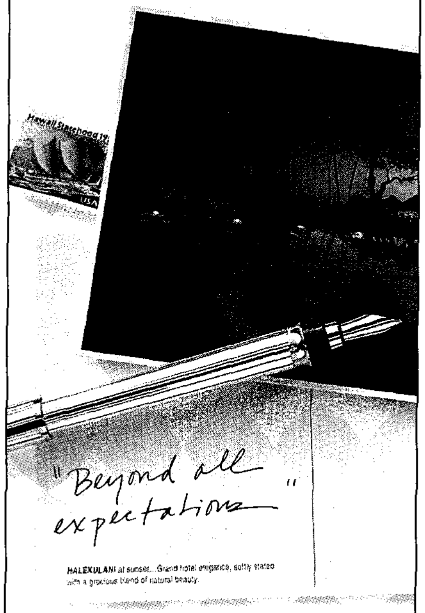

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THE NEW YORKER

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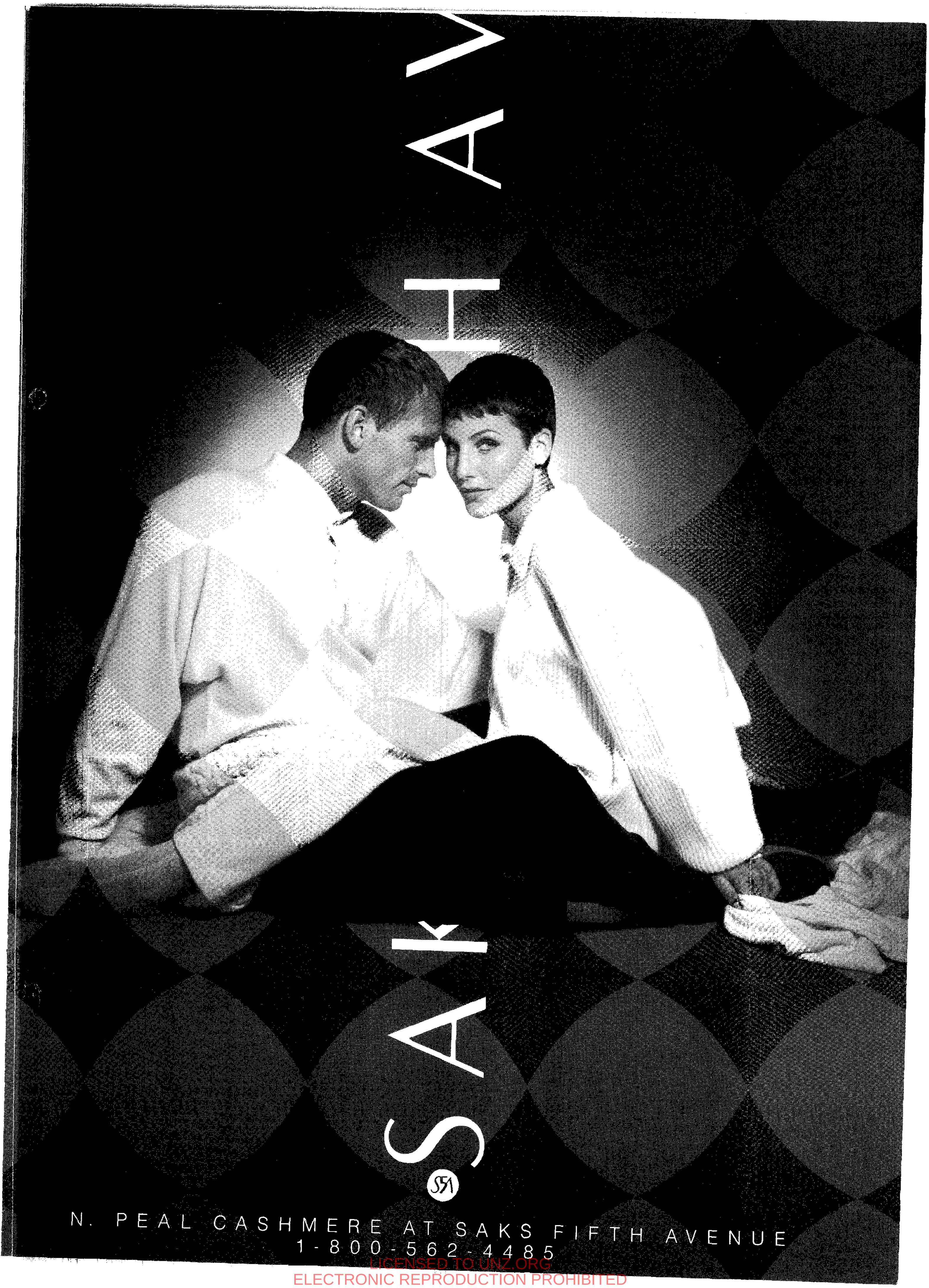

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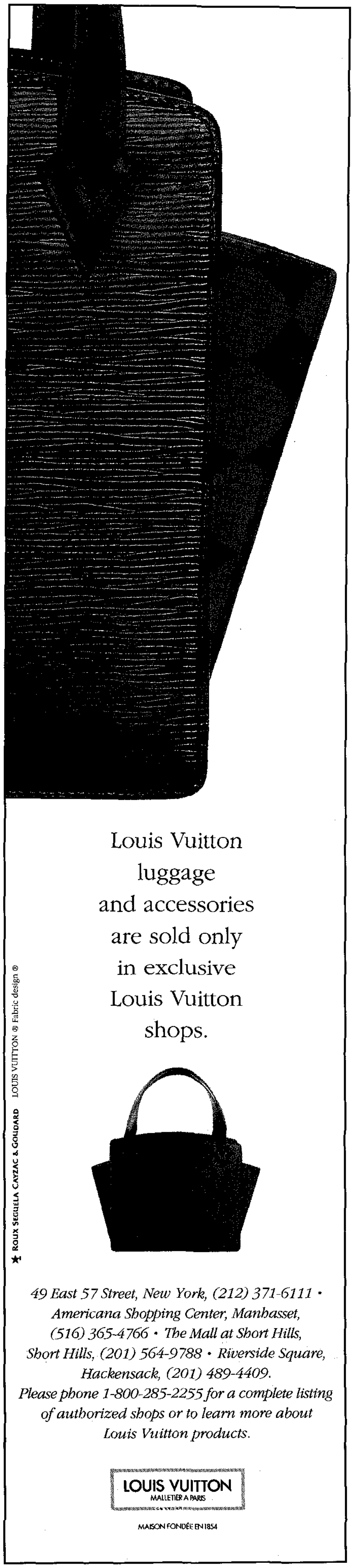
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COMMENT

BORIS ALONE

WHEN Andrei Sakharov died, on December 14, 1989, the movement for democratic transformation in what would soon become the former Soviet Union lost its secular saint. With Sakharov's death, that vast part of the world whose center is Moscow was thrown out of kilter. Its moral gyroscope was lost.

Boris Yeltsin, a vivid populist who could not hope for sainthood, tried to fill the political void. On the day of Sakharov's funeral, Yeltsin, the very image of the burly regional Party boss, walked in the funeral cortège, staying as close as he could to the coffin. He wore an expression of determined grief. Certainly he wanted to impress the millions who revered Andrei Dmitrievich, but he seemed to be after more than mere political advantage; it was as if he hoped that some of Sakharov's uncanny wisdom might transfer itself to him.

God knows Yeltsin could have used some of that wisdom last week, during the events that Russians are referring to, with varying degrees of irony, as "the October revolution." While it was unquestionably Yeltsin's opponents who incited the bloodshed with their call to take to the streets and storm key public buildings, his original decree, dissolving parliament and scheduling early elections, had been tactically risky and morally ambiguous. The indelible image of a burning legislature, with its inescapable suggestion of the Reichstag fire (though its political meaning is essentially the opposite), is a poor symbol for the process of building democracy in Russia.

Neither the Clinton Administration nor Russia itself will serve the cause of reform well by indulging Yeltsin in a prolonged period of authoritarian swagger. No one can afford the kind of czar-worship reflected in "Czar Fyodor," Aleksei K. Tolstoi's verse drama about a distant age:

> O Mighty Lord, thou hast no choice:
> Boris alone can rule thy kingdom.
> Just he—leave him
> The burden and the onus of the crown.

Yeltsin surely remembers Sakharov's warnings to Mikhail Gorbachev on the dangers of concentrating unlim-

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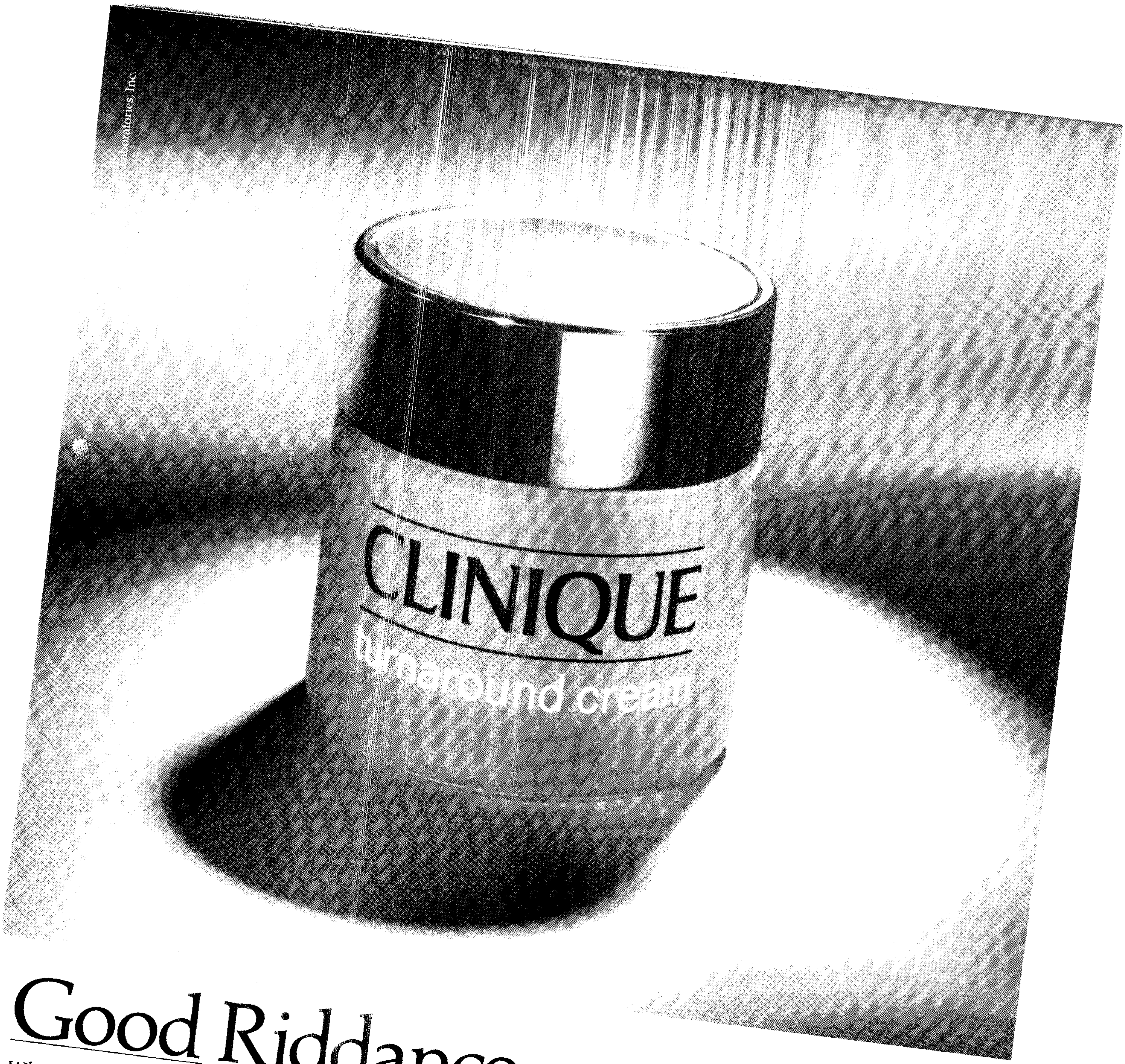

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"What ever happened to all those great Hillary Clinton jokes?"

ited power in the hands of one man.

There are people in Russia who wish Yeltsin to be a homegrown Pinochet—an authoritarian, who would end all democratic pretenses in the name of social order and economic discipline. But, while Yeltsin is by no means free of the authoritarian reflexes that come naturally to one bred in Bolshevism, he has, since joining the Party élite, in 1985, shown an astonishing ability to evolve as a leader and as a man.

Both Gorbachev and Yeltsin matured in the semi-mystical, semi-brutal world of Brezhnev's Communist Party. Both men served the Party, and their own careers, meticulously. Both routinely took part in the competition to see who could flatter Brezhnev the most. Gorbachev extolled the "philosophical penetration" of "Little Land," Brezhnev's ghostwritten memoir of bogus military exploits. Yeltsin's speeches were deemed so sycophantic that his opponents later circulated photocopies of them around Moscow in an attempt to disgrace him.

The remarkable curve of Gorbachev's evolution is now history. Spurred by a shuddering economy to open Soviet society, he freed political prisoners and granted considerable liberty to religion, the press, and dissident political groups. Censorship eased; intellectual life revived. Almost single-handed, he ended the Cold War and made a start at disassembling the Soviet military machine. His reluctance to use Leninist methods always seemed to prevail over his attachment to Leninist theory. For this, even Yeltsin, a usually unforgiving rival, admits, Gorbachev will "go down in the history of mankind." But there came a time, in 1989 or 1990, when Gorbachev approached the limits of his ability, or willingness, to evolve further. Rather than concede the historic illegitimacy of Communist Party government, he clung to what he called "the socialist choice." In the end, when the utter hollowness of that "choice" was clear to nearly everyone but him, he was swept away.

Yeltsin's evolution has been different but no less dramatic. In October of 1987, he shattered the illusion of unanimity in the Communist Party when he attacked the ritual worship of the General Secretary and the intransigence of the Politburo conservatives. In 1989, he returned from political exile and, with Sakharov, helped build an opposition alliance that embraced both Moscow intellectuals and Siberian coal miners. And in 1991 he was elected President of Russia and then faced down a coup led by the very reactionaries whom Gorbachev had refused to fire.

The defeat of that coup was such an exquisite event, so triumphant and so nearly bloodless, that it created an illusion of historical closure. Democracy, it seemed, was Russia's for the wishing: wake to the new dawn. But, as France proved two hundred years ago—and France is far from being the only exemplar—the road to liberty, equality, and fraternity can be drenched in blood. Even the seemingly smooth evolution of a democratic United States has been filled with violence and violation of principle. One thinks not only of the Civil War and of the Revolutionary War itself but also of such lesser instances as Lincoln's suspension of habeas corpus, Wilson's imprisonment of Eugene Debs, and Roosevelt's internment of Japanese-Americans during the Second World War.

In many areas, Yeltsin is working without a map. The violence of last week and the complicated political confrontations that preceded it prove just how dangerous the uncharted territory he must traverse is and is likely to remain. If Yeltsin is to earn himself the historical place he so dearly wants, he cannot risk flouting the basic liberties of the press and of association. He should not expect—or even desire—a new elected parliament that would simply do his unquestioned bidding. Without both the lubricant of consensus and the traction of criticism, he risks possessing too much authority and not enough wisdom.

Whatever leverage Washington has in Moscow should be used to encourage the best instincts in Yeltsin. And that means, among other things, encouraging a system that does not place too much power in one man's hands. We can hope that Boris Yeltsin still aspires to follow the lead of Andrei Sakharov. If he does, then, even as the illusions of August, 1991, fade, its promise remains. ♦

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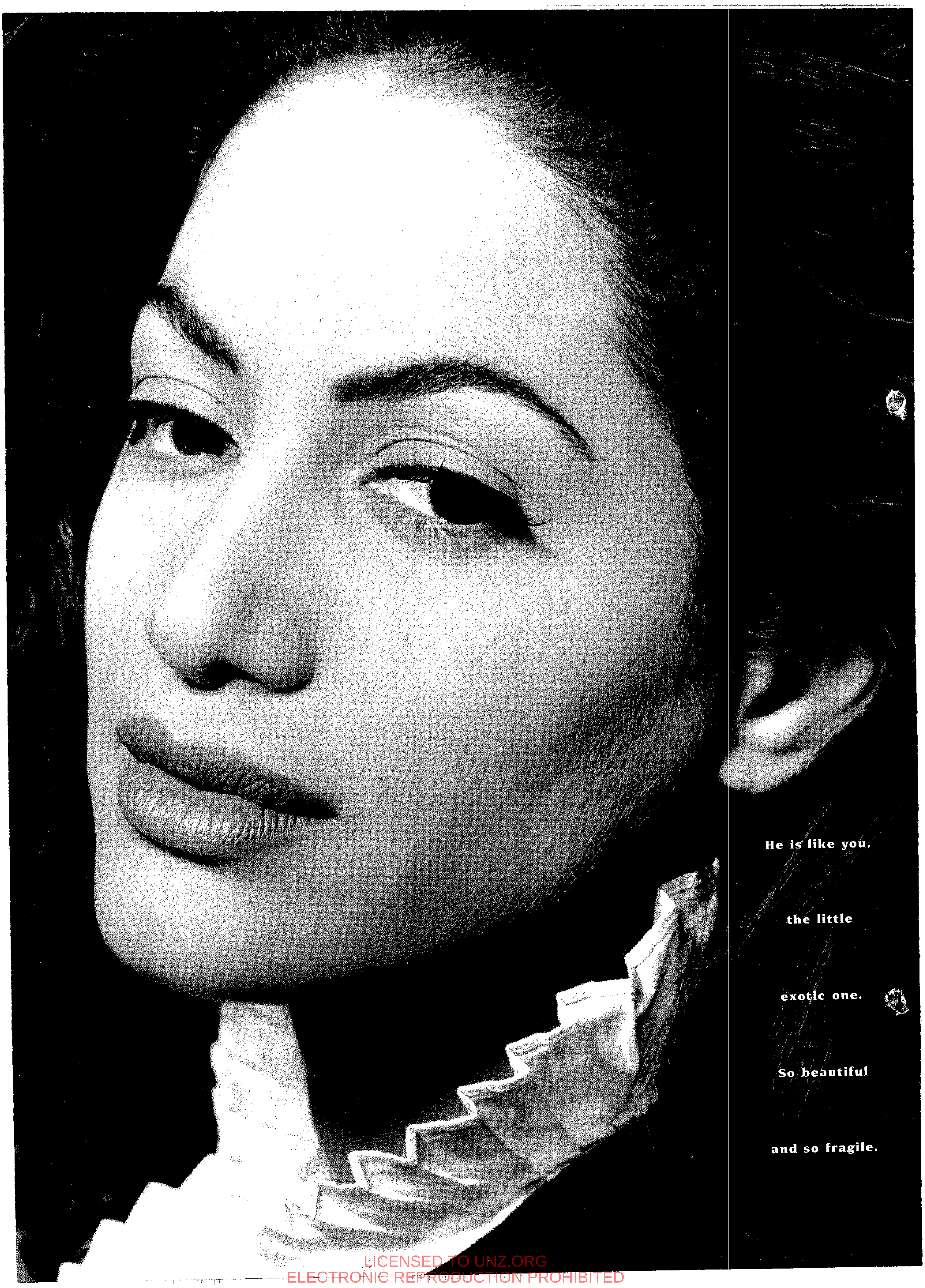
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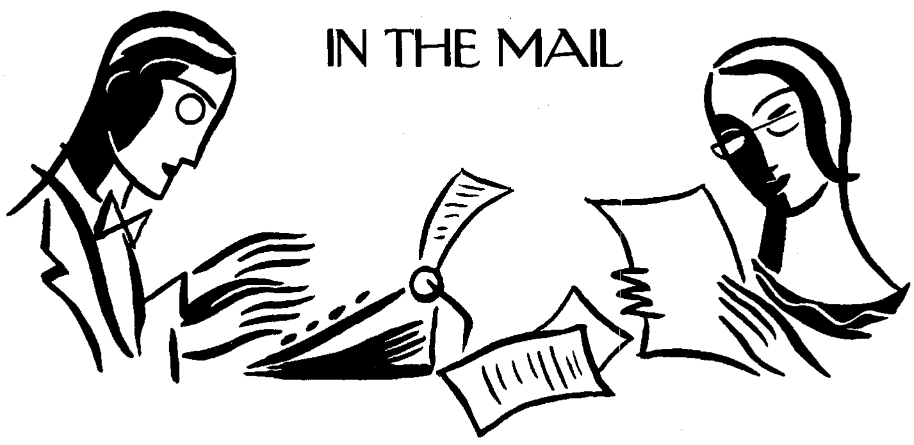


HOW TO GET AN ULCER

I read with great interest and enthusiasm Terence Monmaney's "Marshall's Hunch" (September 20th). His article should give all scientists one more dose of the anti-arrogance medicine that we constantly need.

There is one point that I'd like to bring up to encourage further thought. That is the refrain derived from the hubris of the biomedical establishment: "Just the fact that a bug causes peptic ulcers, long considered the cardinal example of a psychosomatic illness, is a spear in the breast of New Age medicine, which invokes the mind-body link as the key to health."

As one who has taught the histophysiological basis of the relation of emotional stress to disease in my histology course since 1970, I welcome the new findings that an infection is involved in peptic ulcer; but I decry those who crow about the defeat of New Age doctors when they have no data whatsoever to deny the involvement of stress in the etiology of the disease. It is wonderful to know that all the palliatives, surgery, and psychotherapy that used to be required for treating peptic ulcer may no longer be needed; but did we laugh at or denigrate the efforts of Sister Kenny after the advent of the Salk and Sabin vaccines?

Although *almost* everyone who has peptic ulcer has the infection (and maybe those who aren't infected have got their ulcer through excessive use of aspirin or some other chemical), a very high proportion of the population has the infection but not the disease. There is a massive amount of data that indicate the *contribution* of stress to the development of disease, without calling it *causative*. We all carry rhinoviruses in our respiratory systems; yet, without any massive additional exposure, sometimes we get colds. Is that not suggestive of illness in which the mind is involved? Why not the same situation here?

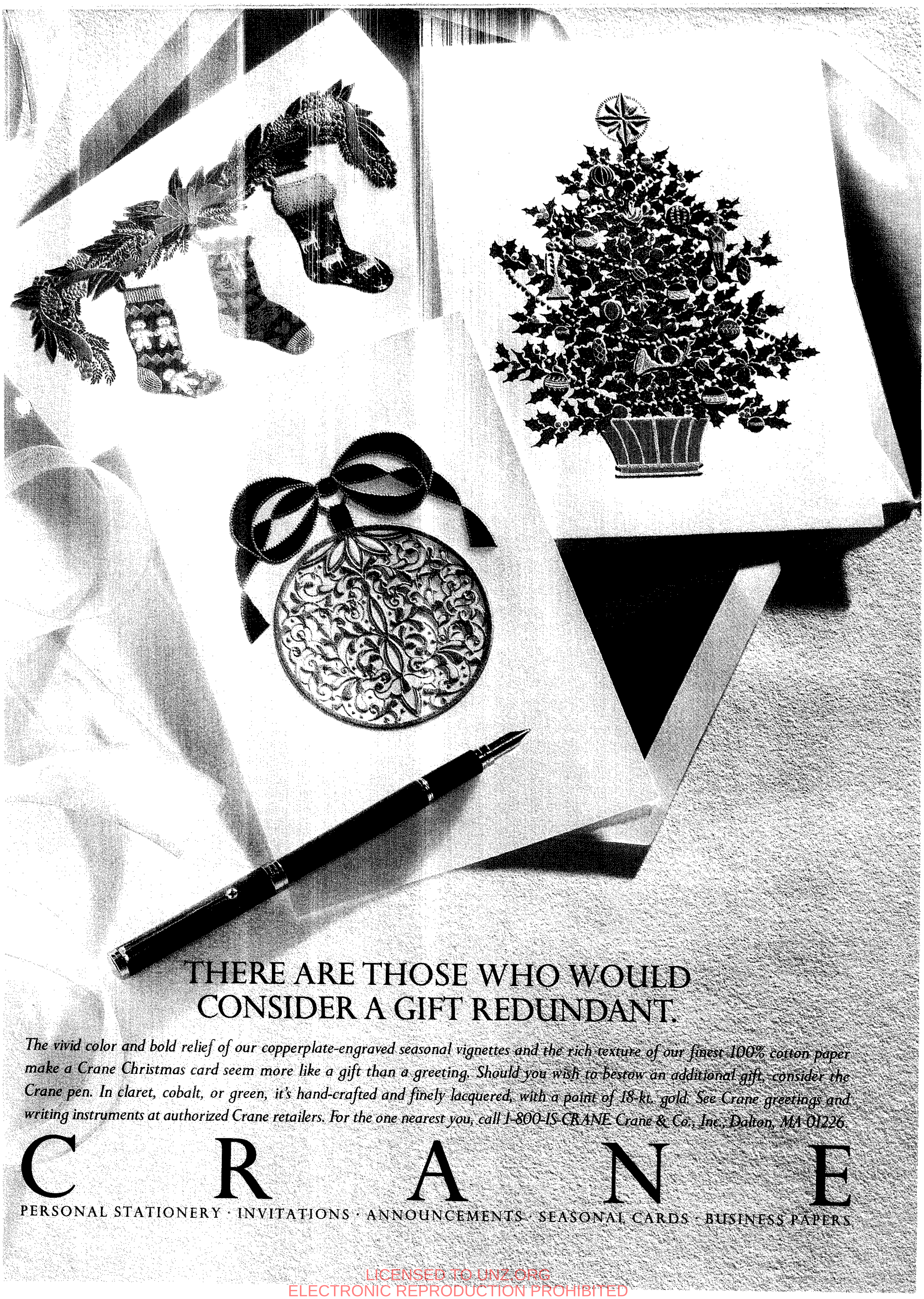
JOHN W. ANDERSON, PH.D.
Emeritus Professor of Anatomy
University of Wisconsin Medical School
Madison, Wis.

O'HARA APPEAL

I have a very high regard for the work of John O'Hara, but even those who do not should object to "The Roar of the Canon," Harold Brodkey's appraisal in your issue of September 13th. Its publication in your pages constitutes a striking repudiation of a great writer by the magazine that published most of his best short stories.

In her recent *Paris Review* interview, Fran Lebowitz states her great admiration for O'Hara: "To me, O'Hara is the real Fitzgerald. . . . He did the thing that students are told a writer should most aspire to: he made a whole world. A totally coherent world. I love him. I love his short stories." She also says, "I think O'Hara is an underrated writer because every single person who knew him hated him. . . . He was also an extremely popular writer and that probably hurt him, but mostly it was the fact that everyone hated him."

To all too many critics, one fears, O'Hara's popularity cinches the case against literary merit. Brodkey's piece is full of disdain for O'Hara's popular appeal. There seems to be no other reason for his presenting the fact that " 'From the Terrace' was made into a movie, with Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward." Mr. Brodkey admires Nabokov—



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who could not?—and consequently it seems unlikely that he would gratuitously note that "Lolita" was made into a movie, with Shelley Winters and James Mason.

DAVID M. LEBEDOFF
Minneapolis, Minn.

BORDER CULTURE

Living in Brownsville, I am familiar with the Joey Fischer murder case that Marie Brenner investigated in "Murder on the Border" (September 13th). My parents and sister attended the rosary services and although I did not know Joey Fischer personally, I had graduated from St. Joseph Academy a few years earlier.

When Brenner makes reference to a group of Anglo women who "talk as if they were expatriates, trying to cope in a colonial outpost," she points to the historical context of racial and economic exploitation crucial to any understanding of South Texas. Cultural conflict has characterized border history, often with deadly results for Anglo and Tejano alike. As Anglo-Texans gained military and political ascendancy after Texas broke from Mexico, in 1836, legends of the Texas Rangers and racist theories of the degenerate (tainted with Native American blood) Tejano formed the cornerstone of myths of Anglo superiority. These myths legitimized Anglo dispossession and then exploitation of Tejanos. Tejanos remember this conflict as one of crushed dreams and rampant injustice. One can hear this in the strains of the *corridos* (border ballads) from the turn of the century that chronicled acts of Tejano resistance.

That Joey Fischer read "Chronicle of a Death Foretold," by the Colombian Gabriel García Márquez, proves useful as a literary device, but a much more relevant text would have been Américo Paredes's "George Washington Gómez." This modernist novel comes closer to accurately depicting the Tejano experience in Brownsville.

JOHN M. GONZÁLEZ
Brownsville, Texas

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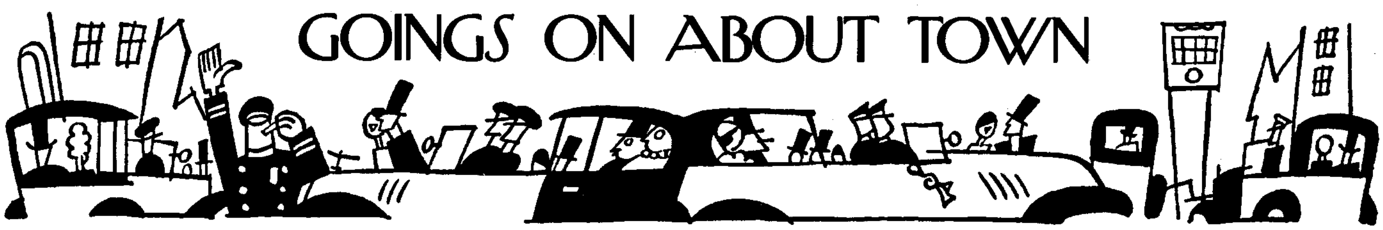


THE THEATRE

Career Concerns

How do you turn Saint-Exupéry's charmingly illustrated classic "The Little Prince" into a musical? One idea is to stay close to the original by having a sketch artist join the cast onstage every night and projecting his illustrations on a scrim. (That's what will happen in the production that opens at the 28th Street Theatre on October 17.) Another is to depart from the original by casting a girl in the lead: Daisy Eagan, the young ("almost fourteen") singing actress whose memorably intelligent performance in "The Secret Garden" won her a Tony in 1991.

Dragged out of rehearsal for an interview, Miss Eagan explained that playing a boy will not be a new experience for her; she's done it before, as the title character in "Tiny Tim's Christmas Carol" and as the understudy for Gavroche in "Les Misérables." But boys' parts are more difficult for her than girls': "I'm not a boy, so it's harder to understand the emotions. And there's the pressure—the kids in school, they tease me when I play boys." Also, to portray the Prince she'll have to cut her short dark-blond hair "even shorter."

She's not sure if she wants to go on acting forever, what with the pressure and the haircuts. But she's worried about another kind of professional growth right now: at four feet eleven, she's afraid she may be too lofty. "I think the Little Prince has to be a *very* small person," she said. "Also, I'm beginning to look more like a young woman now. So playing a little boy is more of a challenge." She wriggled briefly on her chair, then recovered her poise: "Which is good—actors need challenges."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

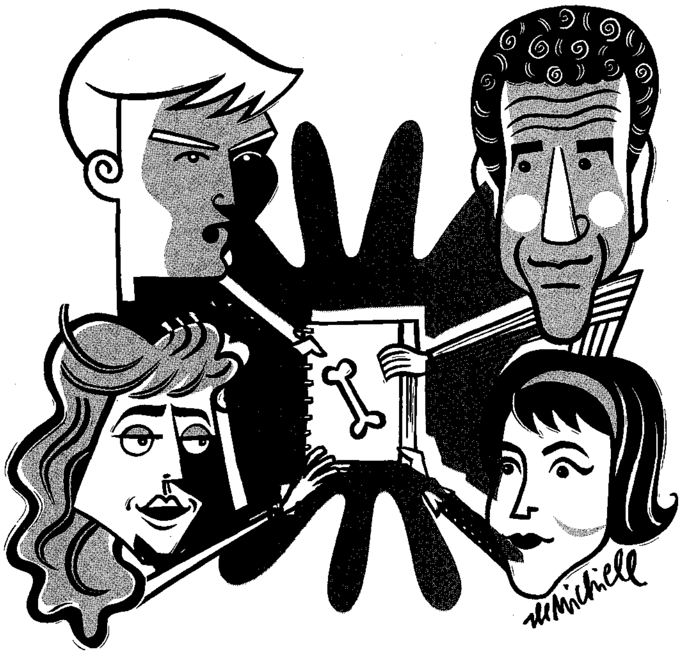
(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			13	14	15	16
17	18	19				

Angels in America: Perestroika—The second half of Tony Kushner's epic work begins previews on Oct. 16. With Kathleen Chalfant, David Marshall Grant, Marcia Gay Harden, Ron Leibman, Joe Mantello, Ellen McLaughlin, Stephen Spinella, and Jeffrey Wright. Part One ("Millennium Approaches") has the same cast; the two shows will run in repertory. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Burning Bright—A 1950 play by John Steinbeck. This adaptation, written and directed by Damien Gray, had its début last summer at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh. Opens Oct. 14 at 8 and runs through Oct. 30. (Workhouse Theatre, 41 White St. 431-9220.)

Forbidden Broadway 1994—A new edition of Gerard Alessandrini's parodies, including spoofs of "Angels in America," "Sunset Boulevard," and "The Who's Tommy." In previews. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)



Clockwise from top left, Loren Dean, Tony Roberts, Mary-Louise Parker, and Polly Draper in "Four Dogs and a Bone."

Four Dogs and a Bone—A new play written and directed by John Patrick Shanley. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

A Grand Night for Singing!—An expanded version of the Rodgers and Hammerstein revue that played at Rainbow & Stars last spring. In previews. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Holly Near: Fire in the Rain—The feminist singer in an autobiographical play with music. Preview on Oct. 13. Opens Oct. 14 at 8. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

The Lights—The Atlantic Theatre Company in a new play by Howard Korder. Mark Wing-Davey directed. This is the first production in Lincoln Center Theatre's Festival of New American Plays. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Little Prince—Daisy Eagan stars in a musical adaptation of the 1943 book by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Previews through Oct. 16. Opens Oct. 17 at 7. (28th Street Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 279-4200.)

Pterodactyls—A dark comedy by Nicky Silver, with Kelly Bishop. In previews. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

Snowing at Delphi—A comedy by Catherine Butterfield. Previews through Oct. 17. Opens Oct. 19 at 8. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

The Twilight of the Golds—A play by Jonathan Tolins, starring Jennifer Grey, David Gro[illegible] Raphael Sbarge, Judith Scarpone, and Michael Spound. Arvin Brown directed. In previews. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Wonderful Tennessee—The Abbey Theatre's production of Brian Friel's new play. Robert Black, Catherine Byrne, Ingrid Craigie, John Kavanagh, Donal McCann, and Marion O'Dwyer portray three middle-aged Irish couples taking a holiday together. Patrick Mason directed. In previews. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Angels in America: Millennium Approaches—The first half of Tony Kushner's epic work is set in 1985, at the height of the Reagan counter-revolution, and it maps the trickle-down effect of self-interest as Kushner's characters ruthlessly pursue their private and public destinies. The play is a saga about sexual politics, death, and decency. Not to be missed. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Annie Warbucks—Kathryn Zaremba, an infant phenomenon if ever there was one, has the title role in this beguiling sequel to "Annie." After sixteen years, the old team—Thomas Meehan (book) and Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin (music and lyrics)—is still in top form. With Donna McKechnie, Harve Presnell, Harvey Evans, Marguerite McIntyre, and Raymond Thorne, to say nothing of a merry scattering of orphans. (8/23 & 30/93) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

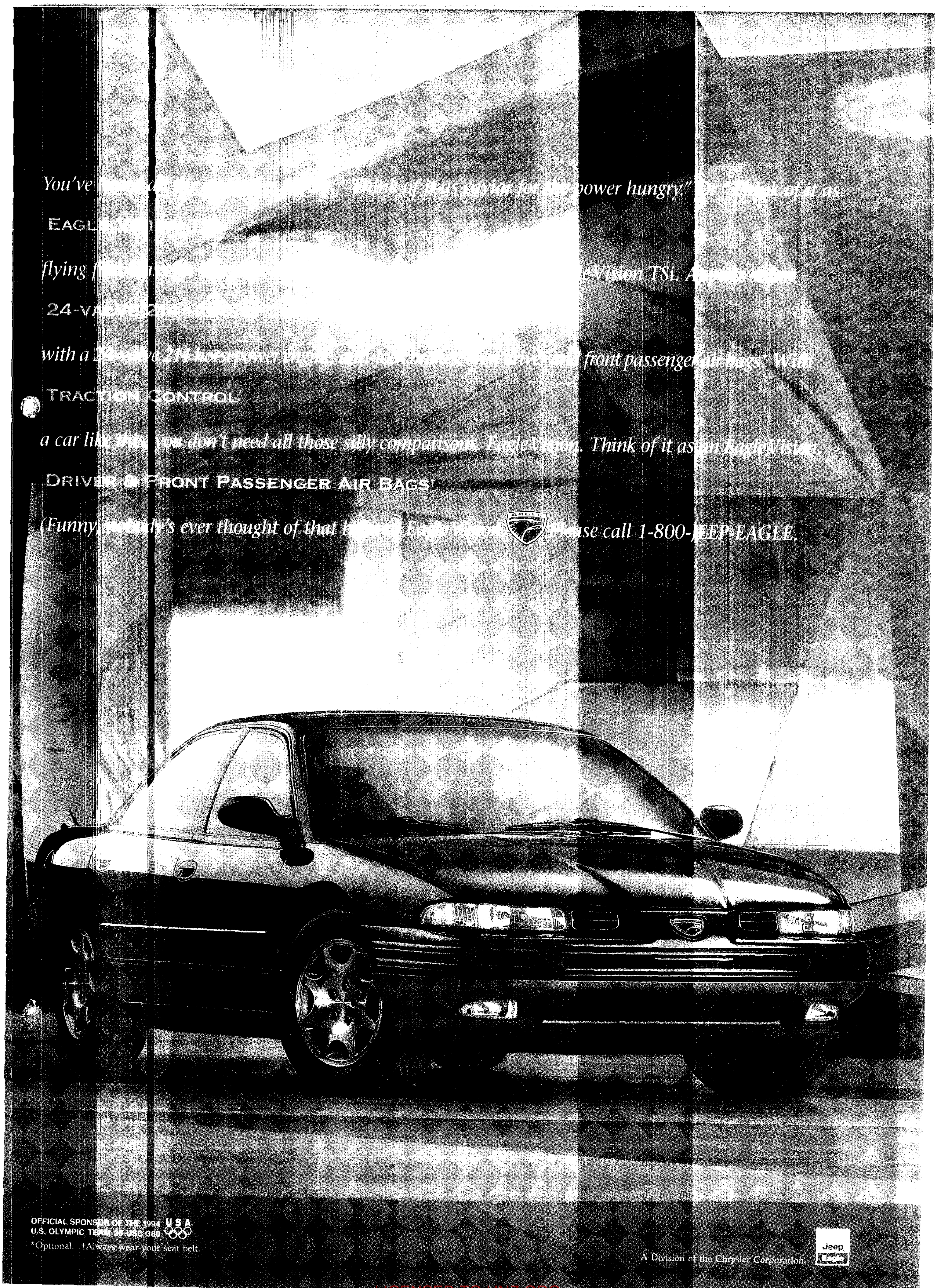
Bibliomania—A one-man show by Roger Rosenblatt. (American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Blood Brothers—A glum non-musical musical, imported from Britain, about twin boys who are separated at birth. The boys later become friends, love the same girl, and die violent deaths. W[illegible]y Russell wrote book, music, and lyrics, to [illegible] avail. The cast includes Shaun and David Cassidy and Petula Clark. (5/10/93) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Blown Sideways Through Life—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store as a child to being a "phone girl" in a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

The Eye of the Beholder—Kim Hunter plays a gullible amateur painter and John Hickok is her nephew, a muckraking journalist who blackmails a gallery owner and a critic into making her a star. He then accepts a large

ROBERT DEMICHIELI



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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bribe not to publish an exposé, and the art world's hypocrisy remains a secret. It's a tired idea, and Ira Wallach, the playwright, does nothing to wake it up. Miss Hunter, however, is consistently fine; her expression, as she looks at one of her paintings while her nephew reads aloud from some laudatory art criticism, is worthy of Lucille Ball. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 581-3808. Closes Oct. 17.)

Family Secrets—Sherry Glaser is the sole performer in this comedy, which she wrote with Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

The Fiery Furnace—Julie Harris stars in a play by Timothy Mason. Presented by Circle Repertory Company. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

El Greco—An opera about the Spanish painter, with music by William Harper and a libretto by Bernardo Solano. Tom O'Horgan directed. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes Oct. 17.)

Howard Crabtree's Whoop-Dee-Doo!—A witty, topical musical revue. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. For information about tickets, call 777-7474.)

In Persons—The actors Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson in a show about their lives in the theatre. Martin Charnin was the director. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Jeffrey—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally and a star performance by the redoubtable Chita Rivera, in the title role. Harold Prince was the director. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. The cast also includes Anthony Crivello, as Valentin, and Jeff Hyslop, as Molina. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Later Life—The reunion, after thirty years, of a middle-aged man and woman who were once in love is at the heart of this play by A. R. Gurney. Mr. Gurney has written with his customary wit and perception, and the actors do him proud. The play was seen recently at Playwrights Horizons. (6/14/93) (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

The Maids—Jean Genet's 1947 play. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Oct. 31.)

Marriage Play—The premise is simple enough: a man in a midlife crisis comes home one day after thirty years of marriage and says "Hello. I'm leaving you" to his too tolerant (or possibly contemptuous) wife. Since it's by Edward Albee, though, it's disturbing, funny, violent, and not in the least sentimental. The roles are powerfully acted by Kathleen Butler and Tom Klunis (who originated them in Vienna in 1987) and the show is incisively directed by James Houghton, the artistic director of the Signature Theatre Company. This is the first in a season of seven Albee plays, and if it's a harbinger there's a lot to look forward to. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes Oct. 31.)

Mixed Emotions—Katherine Helmond and Harold Gould portray a widow and a widower, in a romantic comedy by Richard Baer. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Oedipus the King—Timothy Wheeler is the king and Margo Skinner is his beloved wife and mother, in a solid, traditional production of Sophocles' play, with masked actors in multiple roles. Ms. Skinner (who is also Teiresias) and Sean Pratt (Creon) take turns as the various bearers of increasingly bad news. The translation, by Stephen Berg and Diskin Clay, does especially well by the chorus. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes Oct. 23.)

Shakespeare for My Father—A marvellous one-woman show, in which Lynn Redgrave reviews her own life in a search for her unloving father, Michael Redgrave. She combines anecdotes, brilliant thumbnail impersonations of British actors, and wry reminiscence with passages from Shakespeare. (5/10/93) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical has moved to a bigger theatre. Diane Fratantoni has replaced Judy Kuhn, but the other principals are the same: Boyd Gaines, Sally Mayes, Howard McGillin, Jonathan Freeman, Brad Kane, Lee Wilkof, and Louis Zorich. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. With Michael Learned, Linda Lavin, Joanne Camp, and Hal Linden. (11/2/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Sophistry—A play by Jonathan Marc Sherman. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

S.S. Glencairn: Four Plays of the Sea—The Willow Cabin Theatre Company in a quartet of one-acts by Eugene O'Neill. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 886-1889. Closes Oct. 31.)

The Who's Tommy—Pete Townshend's music—however muted for Broadway—has an indubitable thrill. This adaptation was directed by Des McAnuff. (5/3/93) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **OLEANNA:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** 47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Eric Bogosian—In two performances of "Pounding Nails in the Floor with My Forehead." (Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 777-6800. Oct. 16 at 9 and 11:30.)

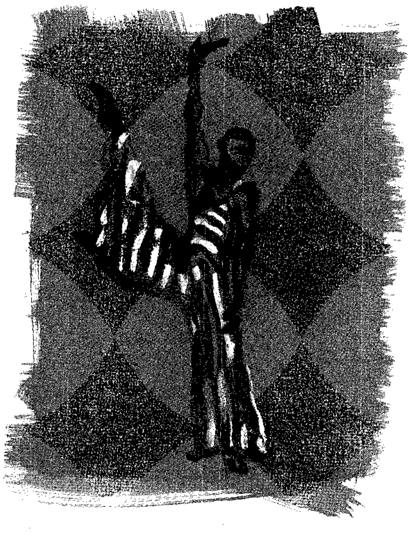
Frank Maya: Paying for the Pool—The comedian's latest show. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Oct. 14 and Oct. 17 at 8, and Oct. 15-16 at 9.)

Danny Hoch—Presenting "Some People," which is about "cultural diversity." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Oct. 14-17 at 7:30.)

Kate Bornstein—In a reprise of her performance piece "The Opposite Sex . . . Is Neither!" (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Oct. 15-16 at 10:30.)

DANCE

Golden Threads



"A Demand Performance"

ELIZA GRAN

Six years ago, inspired by the memorable AIDS-benefit extravaganza "Dancing for Life," Robert LaFosse began looking for an organization to sponsor a similarly extravagant and bountiful event. The dancer-choreographer finally met his match in the Design Industries Foundation for AIDS (DIFFA), which agreed to back an event featuring collaborations between fashion designers and dance-makers. As it turned out, LaFosse and Thaddeus Grimes-Gruczka, a friend and DIFFA staff person, sat down to get letters off to choreographers on January 6 of this year—the day Rudolf Nureyev died of AIDS.

Besides doing good works, the contributing artists will surely present some good new works when "A Demand Performance" takes the stage of the New York State Theatre on October 18. Nineteen dances are on the program, all but two of them new works or New York premières, for which designers have created one-of-a-kind costumes. The Seventh Avenue names include Calvin Klein (for Christopher Chadman), Norma Kamali (for Margie Gillis and Twyla Tharp), Donna Karan (for David Parsons), Todd Oldham (for Robert Garland), and Isaac Mizrahi (for Bill T. Jones). One of the highlights is likely to be the jubilant grand finale, set to a new score by Jonathan Sheffer. There will also be a posthumous première choreographed by Christopher Gillis, the Paul Taylor dancer who had almost finished his work before succumbing to AIDS this past August.

Martha Graham Dance Company—Final performances of the engagement. Oct. 13 at 8: "Frontier," "Deep Song," "Panorama," "Cave of the Heart," and "Demeter and Persephone." . . . ¶ Oct. 14 at 8: "Diversion of Angels," "Celebration," "Deaths and Entrances," and "Maple Leaf Rag." . . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 8: "Celebration," "Deep Song," "Salem Shore" (with narrator Claire Bloom), "Cave of the Heart," and "The Rite of Spring." . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 2: "Celebration," "Deep Song," "Salem Shore" (with Ms. Bloom), "Harvest," and "Maple Leaf Rag." . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 8: "Seraphic Dialogue," "Deaths and Entrances," and "Demeter and Persephone." . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 2: "Frontier," "Deep Song," "Panorama," "Demeter and Persephone," and "Maple Leaf Rag." . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 7:30: "Seraphic Dialogue," "Deaths and Entrances," and "The Rite of Spring." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

"A Demand Performance"—A benefit presented by DIFFA. (New York State Theatre. Oct. 18 at 7. For information about tickets, call 727-3100.)

Molissa Fenley—Oct. 13-14 and Oct. 17: "Esperanto," "Tilliboyo/Escalay," and "Witches' Float." . . . ¶ Oct. 15: "Place," "Inner Enchantments," "Threshold," and "The Floor Dances." . . . ¶ Oct. 16: "Tilliboyo/Escalay," "Provenance Unknown" (in which Philip Glass will perform his score), and "Bardo." (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Evenings at 8.)

Stephen Petronio Company—"Full Half Wrong," "She Says," and "The King Is Dead (Part I)." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 13-16 at 8 and Oct. 17 at 2 and 7:30.)

Rebecca Kelly Dance—In "Boundaries" (première), "Moving Violations II," and "Undercurrents." (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Oct. 14-15 at 8 and Oct. 16 at 2 and 8.)

Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company—The opening performance of a two-week engagement that will run through Oct. 31: "How to Walk an Elephant," "Achilles Loved Patroclus" (première), "Shared Distance," and "War Between the States" (première). (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 19 at 8.)

CONCERTS

Tony Bennett—The Queens native comes to Broadway for a five-night stand. The shows will celebrate the release of Bennett's new album, "Steppin' Out," on which he lends his still-glorious tenor to songs made famous by Fred Astaire, including such gems as "Top Hat, White Tie and Tails," "They Can't Take That Away from Me," and "Cheek to Cheek." (The singer won a Grammy this year for his homage to another inimitable stylist, Frank Sinatra, on the album "Perfectly Frank.") Bennett brings off this latest tribute with casual elegance and sublime intuition, along with the superior technical prowess that's always given him an unfair advantage. (Longacre Theatre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Oct. 19 at 8. Through Oct. 23.)

Wiseguys—Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 13 at 8.

Bette Midler—The final two weeks of "Experience the Divine" at Radio City, presumably with all new Buttafuoco jokes. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Oct. 13-16 and Oct. 19, all at 8. Through Oct. 23.)

Paul Simon—The marathon series of career-retrospective concerts continues. With Art Garfunkel, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and others. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Oct. 13, Oct. 15-17, and Oct. 19, all at 8. Through Oct. 31.)

Billy Taylor—The jazz drummer performs with his trio and guest artist Marian McPartland. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 14 at 7.)

Madonna—"The Girlie Show" comes to the Garden. PM Dawn will open. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Oct. 14-15 and Oct. 17 at 8.)

Richard Stoltzman—Metropolitan Museum. Oct. 15 at 8.

Ottmar Liebert & Luna Negra—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 15 at 8.

Foday Musa Suso—Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Oct. 15 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

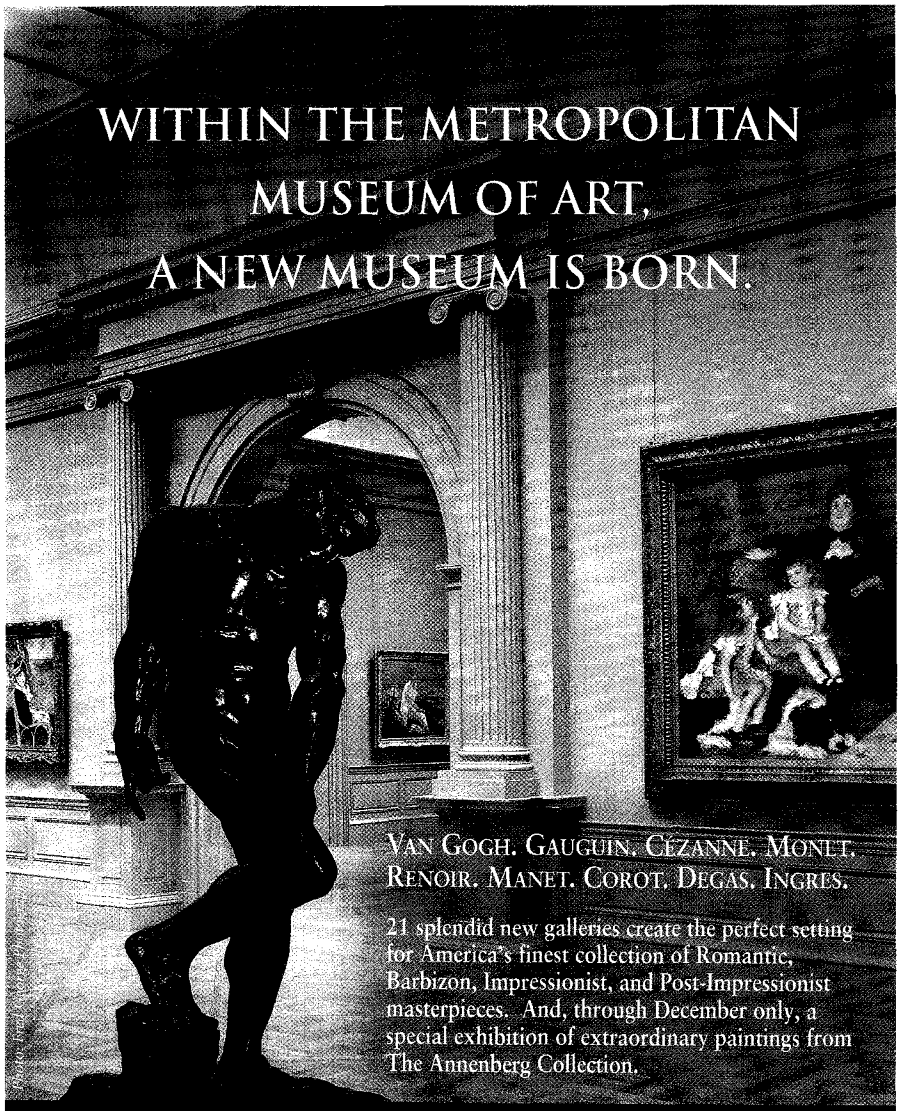
Larry Coryell—With the Benny Powell ensemble. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Oct. 19 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.)

NIGHT LIFE

The Big Top

After a five-city warmup overseas, "The Girlie Show" will roll into town on October 14, trailing an odd collection of mixed notices. Madonna's two-hour revue is a high-tech pop-music spectacle, of course, with a Fellini-circus theme, dancers, costumes (more than two hundred and fifty of them, all designed by Dolce & Gabbana), special effects, bawdy talk, and dazzling energy. It opens with the title song of the thirty-five-year-old singer's latest album, "Erotica," and includes several other songs from that much-maligned record, along with some strong oldies ("Express Yourself," "Vogue," and "Holiday"). Nearly everyone who has seen the show has found it to be great entertainment—better, even, than the 1990 "Blond Ambition" tour. So why does the rhetoric of fiasco and decline hover over the production like a vulture?

Keeping up with Madonna's career can be nerve-racking and exhausting work, and it's impossible to have uncomplicated responses to the multimedia maverick's provocations. Add her manifest shortcomings as a literary performer (the armor-clad "Sex" book) and actress ("Body of Evidence") to the equation, and you have the makings of a backlash. (The reductio ad absurdum of anti-Madonnaism is the *Daily Mail's* recent declaration that it is a "Madonna-Free Zone.") But what, one might ask, does any of this have to do with the Amazing Ciccone's talents as a live performer and pop goddess? Forget the naysayers—the wise thing to do is try to get tickets to "The Girlie Show." Madonna may have failed at other things, but her stage presence—her fluent and daring dancer's imagination, her genius for iconographic playfulness, her libertine expansiveness—is a wonder of our times.



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RECORD STORE ARRIVALS

A highly selective list of brand-new releases we're curious to hear.

THE LEMONHEADS—"Come On Feel the Lemonheads" (Atlantic).

JULEE CRUISE—"The Voice of Love" (Warner).

THE POLICE—"Message in a Box: The Complete Recordings" (A&M).

DIGITAL UNDERGROUND—"Body Hat Syndrome" (Tommy Boy).

JOSHUA REDMAN—"Wish" (Warner).

GEORGE CLINTON—"Hey Man . . . Smell My Finger" (Paisley Park).

ROCK AND FOLK

Academy, 234 W. 43rd St.—In the heart of the theatre district, a haven for those whose musical tastes run left of "Tommy." On Oct. 15, **suede** takes the stage. Suede is the next big thing in a long line of British ambisexual big things that stretches back to Teddy Boy wannabe Cliff Richard and more recently gave us the divine Morrissey. The four Suede heads are working-class blokes who were saved by glam rock: Marc Bolan and Roxy Music are key reference points. Their well-deserved teen-dream popularity can be explained by singer Brett Anderson's fey, clever vocal attack and guitarist Bernard Butler's muscular playing, a combination that produces an aura of sex and tension unmatched since the Jean Genie days of David Bowie and the late Mick Ronson. On Oct. 16: flashy guitar god **steve vai.** Axe-wielders from Keith Richards to the Edge have proved that in rock and roll less can be more; Vai's virtuosity tends to reverse that theory. His mile-a-minute leads are impressive, if you're into that sort of thing. For concert information, call 249-8870.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This big, airy folk-and-rock club used to be the site of a lot of music-industry bashes, but now it's an eclectic and hard-to-figure-out venue for the good, the bad, and (sometimes still) the great. On Oct. 15-16: **the roches,** a trio of sisters who consistently deliver poignant, intelligent urban folk, with harmonies so rich and sweet that they sound positively decadent.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club—a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti—is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to burn brightly here. On Oct. 16: **d-generation** and **fabulon.** It's a rare rock artist who's willing to admit that Duran Duran changed his life, as Fabulon's frontman Kevin Macbeth did in a recent interview. It makes sense that the catchy glam pop on Fabulon's début album, "All Girls Are Pretty—Volume One," falls somewhere between T-Rex and the Monkees. Macbeth wrote all the songs and played most of the instruments on the album, so it's anyone's guess who'll be joining him onstage at CB's, or in what capacity.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A cross between an old-fashioned split-level night club and a parking garage decorated for a senior prom. Despite the balloons and the candy-colored lights, this is a serious room for serious rock-and-rolling. On Oct. 15, catch a wave with **dick dale,** the king of the surf guitar, whose electrifying twang assaults are a blast from the early sixties. On Oct. 16: the **ohio players,** who are known for their droning, driving funk sound and for their seventies album covers, which took soft-core porn to wittily inspired heights.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Physically, the place is sagging a bit, but that's part of its charm. On Oct. 15, **bob mould,** the master of high-efficiency doom and gloom, takes a break from his power-rock trio, Sugar, to offer a solo set. With **vic chesnutt.**

Time Café, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden within this trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. Upstairs is a sumptuous Moroccan bar. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. The **mingus big band** packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, Charles Mingus. On Oct. 15: singer-songwriter **richard barone.** In the early eighties, as frontman for the Hoboken-based group the Bongos, Barone demonstrated a flair for buoyant guitar pop in the best post-Byrds tradition. On his third solo album, "Clouds Over Eden" (released last month), the singer once again showcases his yummy melodies and graceful guitar work and continues to refine the moody, delicate lyricism that runs through his best songs. On Oct. 16: a tribute to composer **raymond scott,** whose music for Warner Brothers pictures starring Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, and Porky Pig delivered swinging surrealism to generations of impressionable youngsters. (Many of his tunes can also be heard on "The Ren & Stimpy Show.") There will be film clips and a slide show narrated by Scott archivist Irwin Chusid. With pianist Wayne Barker.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Zydeco, soul, blues, and rock are the main orders of business here. Singer and harp player/multi-instrumentalist **otis rush** brings in his blues power on Oct. 15-16, with New Orleans pianist **henry butler** and his band. Dining.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Home to an endless Summer of Love. On Oct. 13, **tim finn** attempts to introduce this crowd to the pleasures of the three-minute pop song. Ever since the New Zealander and his younger brother Neil joined forces in Split Enz (back in 1977), their careers have been tarnished by a fierce sibling rivalry. After Split Enz broke up, Tim floundered with a few admirable but poorly received solo records while Neil formed Crowded House and hit it big. Dysfunctional-family therapists rejoiced wh[illegible] Tim joined Crowded House in 1990, and the following year the band released "Woodface," an amazing collection of Beatlesque hooks and harmonies. Sadly, the fraternity didn't last and Tim bailed out after a few awkward gigs. A solo artist once again, Tim Finn will perform songs from his latest album, appropriately titled "Before & After." Brenda Kahn and Matt Keating will also appear.

STANDARDS AND CABARET

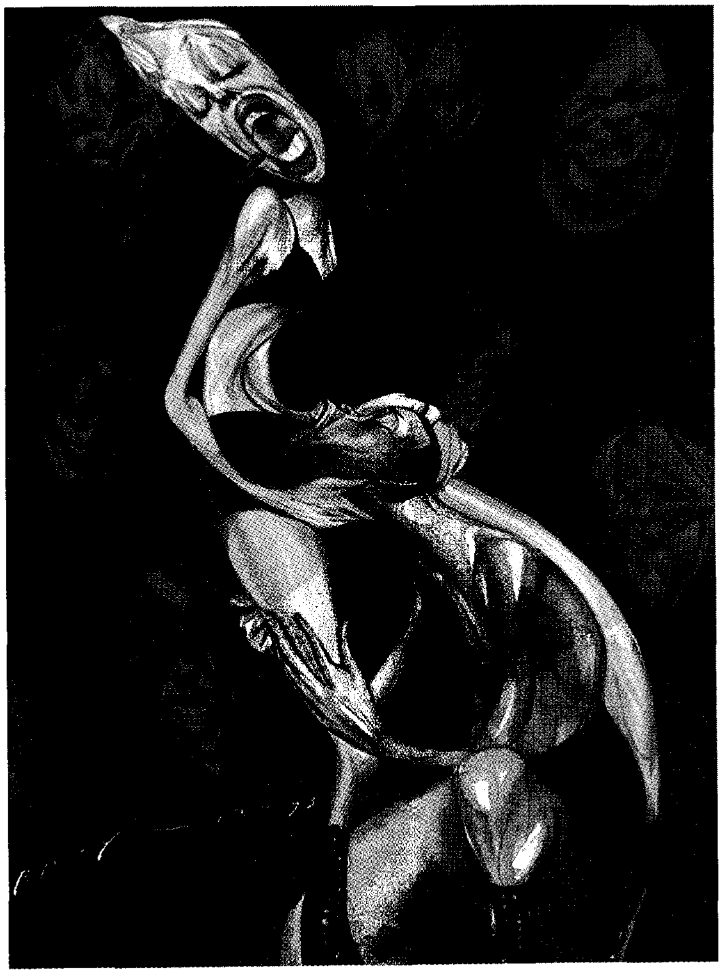
Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**bonnie franklin** continues an engagement that will run through early November. Best remembered for her role on the popular seventies TV sitcom "One Day at a Time," Franklin will be singing mostly ballads. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room with brass railings and mounted O'Keefian animal skulls. Through Oct. 16: performance artist **randy allen,** a master of transgender impersonation, whose recent show, "P.S. Bette Davis," was hailed by the *Village Voice* as "camp genius." Allen's new act, promisingly titled "Something's Got to Give," finds him paying cheeky homage to Marilyn Monroe.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is currently home to Broadway ingénue turned cabaret legend **barbara cook** and her able accompanist, **wally harper.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **barbara carroll** presides at the piano.

Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—A two-floor entertainment center. The bright, clean, wedge-shaped downstairs bar has French windows giving onto the bustl[illegible]f Seventh Avenue. Upstairs, there's a quieter bar and a cabaret, where you'll find a variety of performers nightly. On Oct. 13: "Keough Is a Coward," in which singer-actor **thomas keough** acknowledges the wit and wisdom of Noël Coward through songs and anecdotes.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret with plenty of niceties, if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with



Madonna at Madison Square Garden.

STEVE BRODNER

plastic diamonds and sapphires; and an amazing view. The earthy singer and actress **LAINIE KAZAN** continues all this week. Closed Mondays.

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small red, gold, and green cabaret. **PHILLIP OFFICER** will sing an evening of classics from the forties on Oct. 15. **NANCY DUSSAULT** performs on Oct. 17. A veteran of stage and screen, Dussault is probably best known for her TV work, which has ranged from hosting ABC's "Good Morning America" to playing Ted Knight's wife on the sitcom "Too Close for Comfort." Dining.

JAZZ AND BLUES

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Once you get past the rough bits here—the hordes of tourists, the cattle-car seating, the stiff prices—you're likely to find yourself face to face with some of the biggest names in jazz. As part of the club's ongoing twelfth-anniversary celebration, **RAY CHARLES** continues an engagement through Oct. 17, with the Raeletts and the Ray Charles orchestra. To try to sum up Charles's contributions to R. & B. over the past four decades would be an exercise in breathless futility; suffice it to say that, at sixty-three, the singer and pianist still defines soul as effortlessly as any artist we can think of. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A venerable jazz preserve. The Dado Moroni quintet, featuring Gary Bartz on saxophone, appears through Oct. 16. Dining.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—A softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz grotto. A quartet led by promising young trumpeter **PHILIP HARPER** plays through Oct. 13. On Oct. 14-17: the warm, elegant singing of **GLORIA LYNNE.** On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The musicians set up in the dining room, a clubby-looking space with leather banquettes and well-preserved collectibles: Sunday *Herald Tribune* covers, First World War posters, Hirschfeld drawings. Up front at the bar, you can keep your eye on the musicians, the conversationalists, and sidewalk life. The esteemed pianist **MULGREW MILLER,** whose excellent new album is called "Hand to Hand," teams up with guitarist **RON JACKSON** on Oct. 13-16.

LA CAVE ON FIRST, 1125 First Ave., at 62nd St. (759-4011)—Though situated in the basement of an Upper East Side Mexican restaurant (Pancho Villa), this is an establishment worth checking out. There's nothing trendy or even distinguishing about it, and that may be the secret of its appeal. The entertainment varies, from tap dancing one night to gospel the next. Singers **GEREE WADE** and **DEVORA JOHNSON** appear on Oct. 15, with a trio led by pianist **FRANK OWEN.** On Oct. 16, the renowned clarinetist **BENNY POWELL** plays with a quintet.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A bright spot on the square-by-definition Upper East Side club scene. Don't expect to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. The **BILL PERRY BLUES BAND** arrives on Oct 13. Guitarist **DUKE ROBILLARD,** formerly of the Fabulous Thunderbirds, appears on Oct. 14, and local bluesman **JOHNNY ALLEN** tells it like it is on Oct. 15-16.

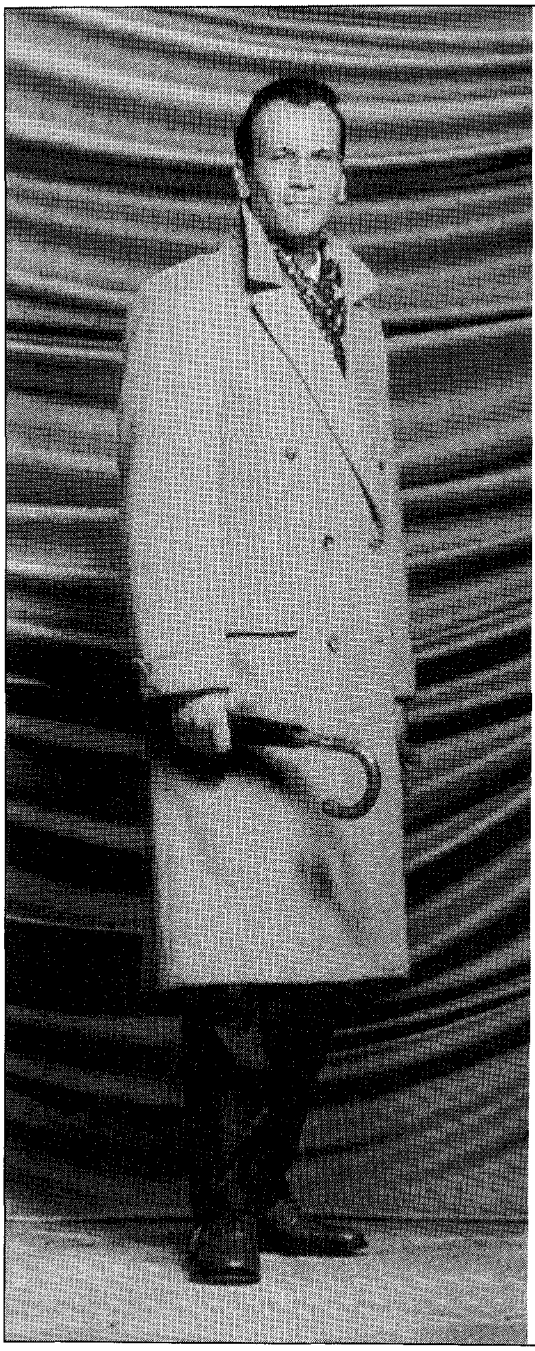
SUPPER CLUB, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Upstairs at this gilt and lamé club is a plush little nook called the Blue Room, far from the midtown racket. All this week, the singer's singer **JIMMY SCOTT** continues a two-week engagement. Scott's intuitive phrasing and remarkable countertenor have inspired jazz and pop balladeers for decades. His own nearly fifty-year-old career got a boost last year, when some of his lost recordings from the sixties and seventies were re-released. To hear Scott render a standard is to hear something classic deconstructed and redefined, with reverence and class.

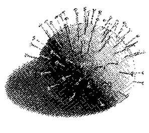
SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—This brown-toned ski chalet of a club is a fine place to study jazz-group dynamics. Pianist **MAL WALDRON** is here for a two-week run with a quintet. Waldron has spent the last four decades whittling notes away, paring his resources down to the bare essentials without sacrificing his expressive vocabulary. (Call him the anti-Oscar Peterson.) During solos that bring a listener to the edge of his seat, Waldron will back himself into a corner and then gracefully escape. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room. The club, which resembles a hunting lodge, is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings are impressive. Through Oct. 17, noted pianist **ROY GERSON** leads a swinging trio. Beginning Oct. 19: the great singer **NANCY LA MOTT.** Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. The soulful saxophonist **PHAROAH SANDERS** leads a quartet here through Oct. 17. Sanders played in John Coltrane's band for four years, until Coltrane's death in 1967. Since then, he's become a master of melody and a restless explorer of the strains on the wild border between jazz and world music. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.**

YARDBIRD SUITE, 35 Cooper Sq., at E. 6th St. (228-5800)—A new East Village club just a stone's throw from the site of the original Five Spot. The **BLUETT 3** appears on Oct. 14-16, featuring Hamiet Bluiett, Okeyarama Asante, and Joe Daley. Dining.





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ART

Cool Kid

JONATHAN LASKER'S abstract paintings are not everyone's cup of tea—at least, not at first. He's far from subtle, if by subtlety one means a light touch or an ineffable searching quality. Part of what's good about Lasker's blunt, cheery-chilly pictures is their gusto and an irritating but intelligent vulgarity. Lasker's bright, fat doodles evoke cupcake fillings and cake frostings and early-sixties covers of *Highlights*, the magazine for children. Like Peter Halley's stuccoed Day-Glo surfaces and circuit-board motifs, they propose a brave new look in painting—a look that simultaneously evokes the precision of high-tech design and the demented verve of Art Brut. His partisans find hope in this paradox. Others find it to be a glib, cryogenic conceit and see Lasker's paintings as formal exercises of obvious talent and little heart.

As usual, everybody is right. Lasker's new paintings (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene Street; through October 23) are the familiar cold and bumptious lot. Something quite exciting, however, is more fully apparent: a kind of inspired infantilism, giddy and free, born of a technique so precisely conceived and so well under control that the artist can now take it for granted. Lasker may prove to be the de Kooning of the "Wayne's World" set.

MUSEUMS

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper, Selections from the Collection" begins with work from the mid-thirties and early forties, and concludes with several eclectic pieces from the mid-sixties. Through Nov. 7. . . . ¶ The museum's new Nineteenth-Century European Painting and Sculpture galleries are now open, featuring, among other works, van Gogh's "Wheat Field with Cypresses" (1889). . . . ¶ Twenty years of Hudson River School works on paper. . . . ¶ "Nineteenth-Century Portraits, Landscapes, and Nudes." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—The long-awaited Joan Miró retrospective, in celebration of the artist's hundredth birthday, arrives on Oct. 17. The show, which spans five decades of activity, includes more than three hundred works in a variety of mediums. . . . ¶ An exhibition of the work of Robert Ryman, who is best known for his elegant, entirely white paintings. . . . ¶ "New Photography Nine" showcases four contemporary photographers whose work ranges from pictures exposed by television emissions to images of squalor in Ukraine. . . . ¶ A "sculptural video" installation by John Sturgeon. . . . ¶ Paintings and assemblages by Moira Dryer (1957-92). . . . ¶ "Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper: Selections from the Design Collection." Twenty objects, including televisions, appliances, and chairs, all designed between 1959 and 1978. Through Nov. 9. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—More than a hundred paintings by Pop master Roy Lichtenstein. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8; Mondays, 10 to 6.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—Paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints by Paul Klee (1879-1940). Through Nov. 5. . . . ¶ "Singular Dimensions in Painting," an exhibit of minimalist work, primarily from the fifties and sixties. Through Nov. 15. . . . ¶ "Drawing the Line Against AIDS." A hundred and fifty-nine works by Rauschenberg, Twombly, Warhol, and others, some of which will be on sale to benefit AIDS research. Through Oct. 19. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"The Cave," a video installation by Beryl Korot, with music by Steve Reich. . . . ¶ Three late works by the Armenian-born artist Arshile Gorky (1904-1948) . . . . ¶ Paintings by Vija Celmins. Through Nov. 28. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Cuba, as seen in photographs, drawings, and biological specimens, including the skull of a previously unknown species of monkey. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Korea: Arts of the Eighteenth Century: Splendor and Simplicity." In Korea, the eighteenth century was a time of relative amity, during which the fine arts underwent a mini-Renaissance. This exhibition successfully evokes the period with a diverse selection of works, ranging from candlesticks festooned with lions, dragons, and flowers to iridescent purple dividing screens decorated with peonies. There's also a reconstructed throne platform called "Sun, Moon, and Five Peaks," the original of which was used by an imperial ruler to reinforce his role as "center of the universe." (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—The first installment of a two-part show called "Kunisada's World" includes more than a hundred opulent works, almost all of them polychrome woodblock prints, by Utagawa Kunisada (1786-1865). Most of the prints depict the entertainments (Kabuki and courtesans, among others) of the late Tokugawa era. Several crowded but well-disciplined multipanel works show backstage scenes. Portraits of "types" of women, like "The Competitive Type" and "The Type Who Is Sad at Parting," are at once satirical and appreciative. Through Oct. 24; the second installment will run from Oct. 26 through Nov. 14. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Face of the Gods: Art and Altars of Africa and the African Americas." This intelligent and visually rich exhibition was curated by the art historian Robert Farris Thompson and reflects his passionate commitment to an enlarged understanding of African art and religion and its continuing influence on the cultures of the Americas. Thompson focusses on the Yoruba and Kongo civilizations of West and Central Africa, respectively, tracing the dissemination and transformation of their ritual forms in the Creole cultures of Haiti, Cuba, Brazil, and North America. That these forms have endured in spite of the brutal displacements of the slave trade and the imposition of Christianity attests to their intrinsic power. Thompson interprets these diverse cultures on their own terms, rather than through the Westernizing lens of "primitivism." Still, one comes away intoxicated by the richness of formal invention. There is a dazzling reconstruction of a *trono* altar from Bahia, Brazil: a billowing mass of rococo white draperies, pillows, and candles dedicated to the Yoruba god Obatalá. This altar epitomizes the syncretism of the New World, conflating the African deity and Jesus Christ. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 11 to 8.)

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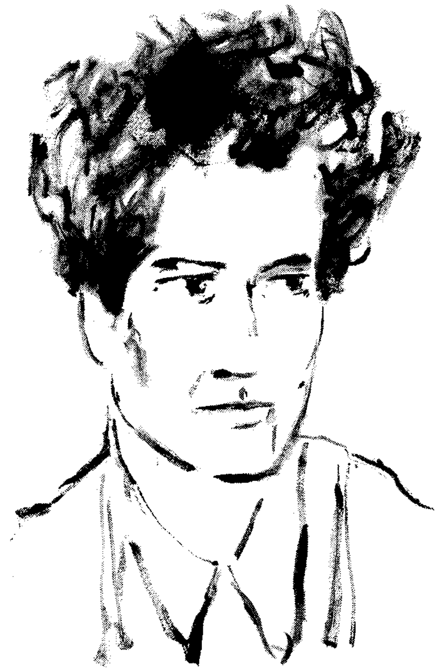

ANN HAMILTON'S *installations follow the familiar formula of trying to refocus our attention on the complexities of sensory experience, but they often make surprising use of organic material. In "Tropos," now at the Dia Center for the Arts, the main ingredient is horsehair—it covers the floor like a bristly sea—and the otherworldliness is enhanced by the faint sounds of a recorded human voice.*

KAREN CALDICOTT

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"The Dead Sea Scrolls: Ancient Civilization / Modern Scholarship." Twelve Scrolls will be on display, along with related artifacts, models, and maps, on loan from the Israel Antiquities Authority. . . . **note:** Anticipating large crowds, the library will issue same-day passes on a first-come, first-served basis. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Mondays and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with shows opening this week.)

Ashley Bickerton—Sculptures made of natural objects, such as stones and coconuts. Opens Oct. 16. Through Nov. 6. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Steve DiBenedetto—Paintings combining traditional imagery with imagery that appears to have been computer-generated. Opens Oct. 16. Through Nov. 13. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St.)

Christian Garnett—Veils of paint which were incised while wet to expose the underlying surface. Opens Oct. 16. Though Nov. 17. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

Joseph Kosuth—A two-room installation incorporating work previously seen at the Venice Biennale. Opens Oct. 16. Through Nov. 6. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Penny Kronengold—Paintings and small terra-cotta and wax sculptures of figures struggling to break out of an enclosed space or a formless mass. Opens Oct. 19. Through Nov. 6. (First Street Gallery, 560 Broadway.)

Robert Kushner—Large-scale paintings with floral motifs, in which the paint surface is embellished with gold, silver, and copper leaf and bronzing powder. Opens Oct. 16. Through Nov. 20. (Solomon, 172 Mercer St.)

Norman Lewis (1909-79)—Drawings from 1945 to 1960 that reveal an affinity with jazz. Opens Oct 15. Through Jan. 15. (Daferner, 568 Broadway.)

Reinhard Mucha—A survey of work from the past ten years: large vitrines and sculptures in various mediums, showing a concern with memory and personal history (symbolic reconstructions of train stations are recurrent). Opens Oct. 19. Through Nov. 20. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

Ross Neher—Atmospheric abstract paintings that achieve their effect with subtle shifts of color and light. Opens Oct. 14. Through Nov. 13. (Beitzel, 102 Prince St.)

Gunter Umberg—New monochromatic paintings and works on paper. Opens Oct. 15. Through Nov. 13. (Stark, 594 Broadway.)

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Lutz Bacher—Bacher's series of paintings "Playboys" is a blithely un-P.C. homage to Peruvian-born illustrator Alberto Vargas (1896-1982), whose work defined a certain brand of exuberant and wholesome smut for a generation of American men during and after the Second World War. Through Oct 21. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St.)

Nancy Bowen—Organic sculptures made of ceramic, glass, and resin, and based on a form of Hindu spirituality. Through Oct. 30. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Deborah Butterfield—Sculptures of horses, made of wood cast in bronze and of found steel. Through Oct. 30. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Alexander Calder (1898-1976)—Two monumental sculptures: a mobile from 1957 and a stabile from 1964, neither exhibited in New York before. Through Oct. 30. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

John Ferren (1905-70)—A survey of abstract paintings and sculptures by a member of the New York School. Through Oct. 30. (Perlow, 560 Broadway.)

Craig Fisher—Large raw canvases that have been stained, spotted, and drawn on. Through Oct. 23. (Ala, 560 Broadway.)

Ann Hamilton—A site-specific installation. (Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Elizabeth Harms / William Crovello—Richly colored abstractions. / Calligraphic watercolors related to the artist's recent abstract sculptures. Through Oct. 30. (Condeso-Lawler, 524 Broadway.)

William Hawkins (1895-1990)—Hawkins moved from Kentucky to Columbus, Ohio, as a young man and never budged again. An illiterate, he supported himself and his family by cleaning bricks, collecting and selling cardboard—whatever. In his spare time he liked to paint, and he amassed newspaper and magazine clippings, advertisements, and photographs that caught his fancy, and let his imagination take it from there. The large works on view here are dated after 1981, by which time Hawkins, at a ripe old age, had achieved some success as a painter. The highlight is a cheery blue-and-yellow "Chrysler Building," which is especially interesting considering that Hawkins never set foot in New York. Through Oct. 25. (Ricco-Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

Roni Horn—A new sculptural installation, "When Dickinson Shut Her Eyes." Through Oct. 30. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Richard Kalina—New paintings, some in which the artist continues his use of the grid and collage, others in which he has dropped the grid for biomorphic forms. Through Oct. 30. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

Tom Kuijpers—Spare still-lifes in a muted palette, painted from an aerial view. Through Oct. 30. (M-13, 72 Greene St.)

Joan Miró (1893-1983)—Gouaches, prints, a painting on wood, letters, and rare photographs. Through Nov. 13. (Prats, 568 Broadway.)

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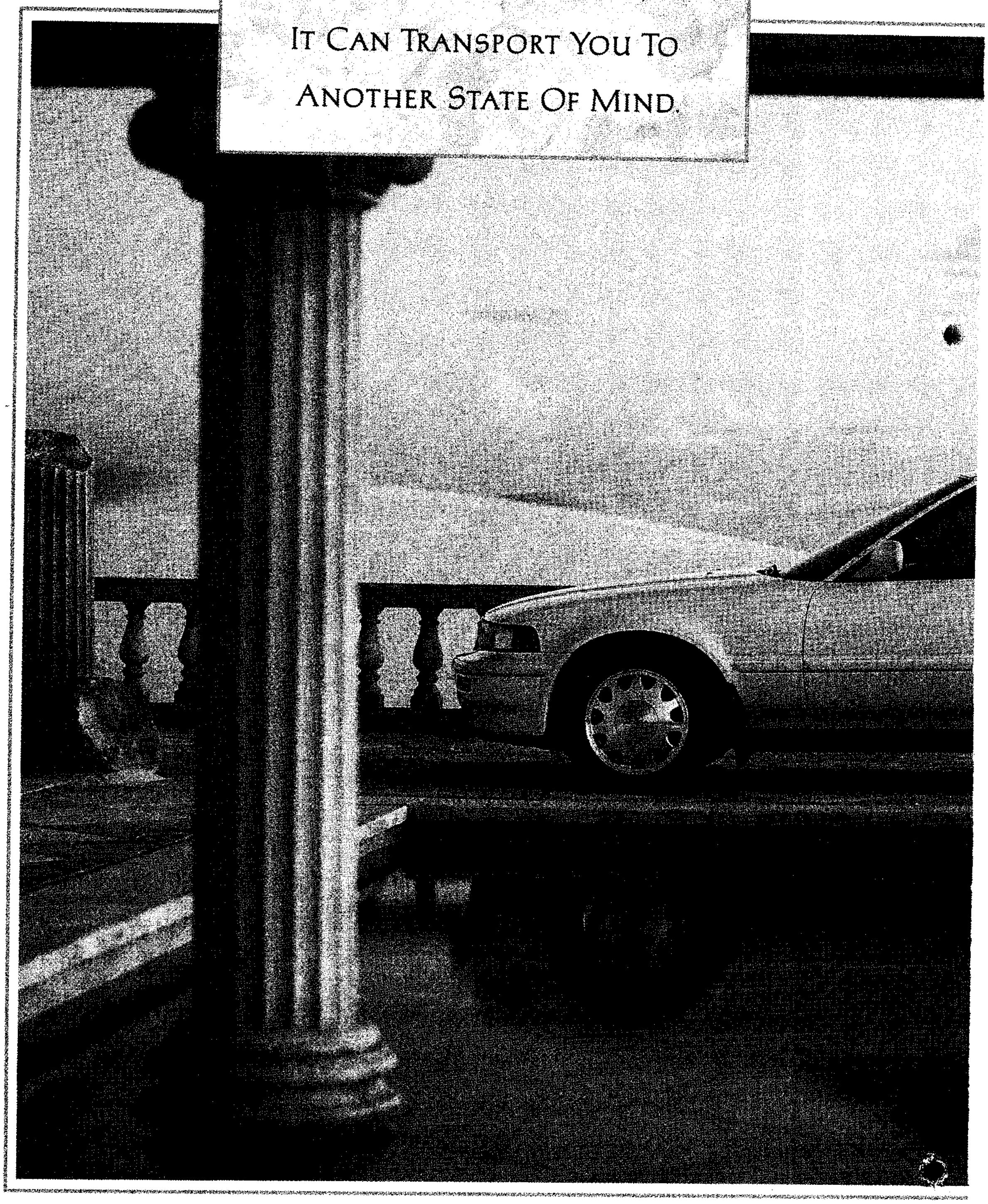

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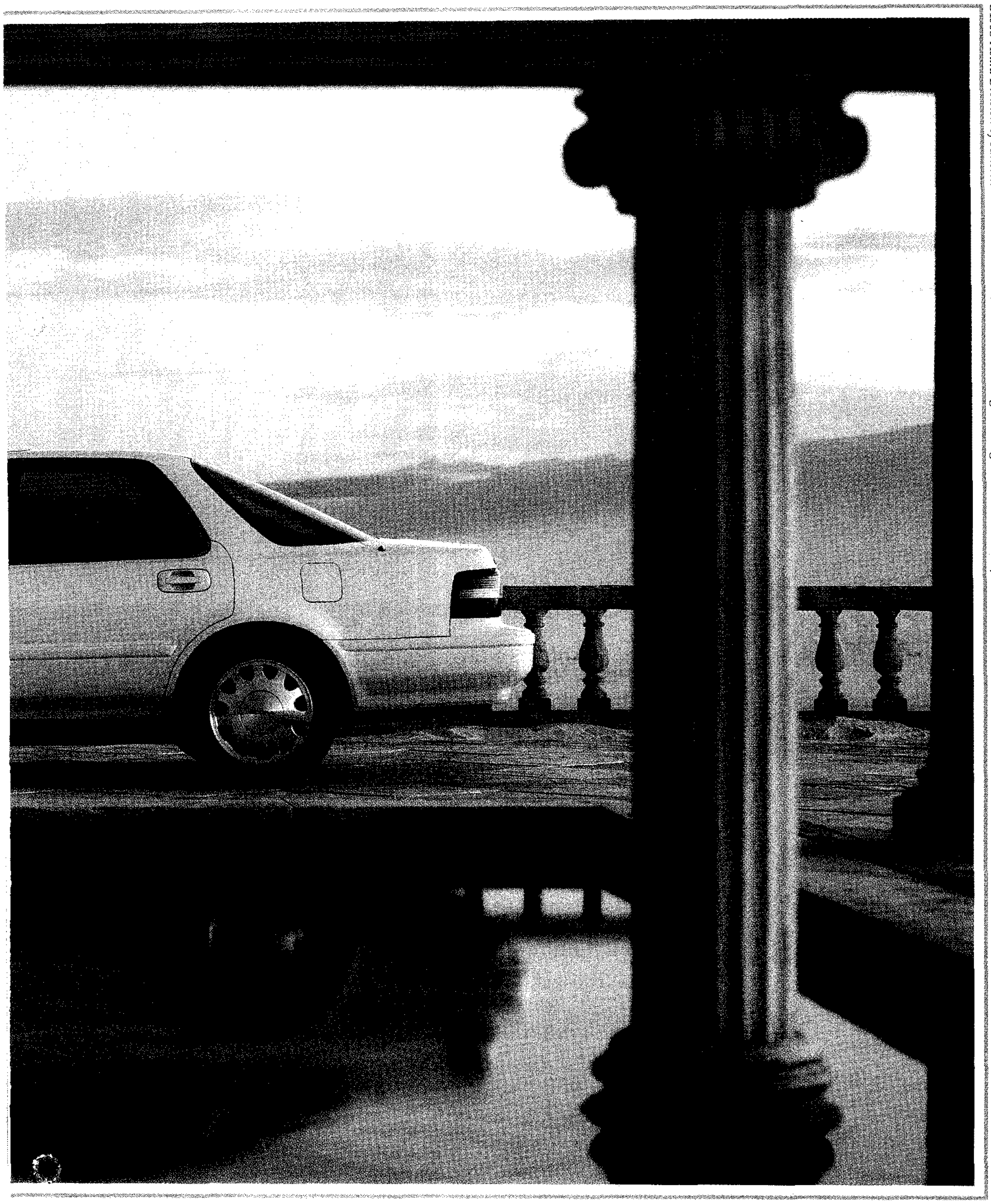

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ART—Cont'd

Robert Morris—A double exhibition: Four large-scale sculptures, made in California in 1991, of precariously balanced industrial I-beams, described by the gallery as *very* minimal. Through Oct. 23. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.) . . . ¶ The fourth in a series of "blind-time" drawings, for which the artist, blindfolded, rubbed graphite onto paper and then documented the process at the bottom of each work. Through Oct. 23. (Castelli, 578 Broadway.)

Dona Nelson—In nine works from the past three years, Dona Nelson uses muslin to great effect. In some works, she twists small pieces of muslin into perfect Giacometti-like figures—a dog's head, a standing woman—which float on bright, Pop-ish backgrounds achieved with poured enamel. In a work like "Octopus Blue," the muslin mimics paint itself; here blue-drenched swirls of muslin cover the entire canvas, like tentacles. And in the apocalyptic "Picture Red" a man's openmouthed profile looms large amid a scattering of muslin figures that have been painted over and effectively buried. Through Oct. 23. (Klein, 594 Broadway.)

Louise Nevelson (1900-88)—The artist's last metal assemblage sculpture. Through Oct. 16. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

Nam June Paik—Prints and multiple video works from the past ten years. Through Oct. 23. (Sigma, 379 West Broadway.)

Philip Pearlstein—New watercolors and drawings of Pearlstein's familiar subject, nudes, as well as of objects from his personal collection (model airplanes, a carrousel ostrich, a Superman doll). Through Oct. 30. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 420 West Broadway.)

Mark Sheinkman / Mike Asente—Monochromatic paintings combining paint and silver emulsion on linen. / Sculptural groupings of objects tethered to the walls by metal rings. Through Oct. 30. (Information, 411 E. 9th St. Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 7.)

Thornton Willis—A series of bright-colored geometric canvases in oil stick. Through Oct. 30. (Zarre, 48 Greene St.)

"Comic Power"—Selections from the work of ninety-five artists whose style is directly or indirectly derived from comic strips, underground comics, graffiti, and other demotic forms of visual narrative, from the "head comix" of Gilbert Shelton and R. Crumb to recent productions by first-rate artists like Leslie Sternbergh and Carol Lay. Through Oct. 30. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

UPTOWN

Robert Arneson (1930-92)—A memorial exhibition of paintings and sculptures from the past twenty years, including a 1972 self-portrait, a bronze portrait of Jackson Pollock, and the centerpiece of the show, "Guardians of the Secret II," Arneson's last major work. Opens Oct. 19. Through Nov. 16. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Debra Bermingham—New paintings and drawings. Opens Oct. 13. Through Nov. 13. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Jared French (1905-88)—Drawings from the sixties, a period when the artist progressed from allegorical figuration to biomorphic imagery. Opens Oct. 13. Through Nov. 13. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"Miró and New York"—A show of paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by artists who were influenced by the Catalan master's New York exhibitions from 1930 to 1950, among them Ilya Bolotowsky, Arshile Gorky, and David Hare. Opens Oct. 13. Through Nov. 27. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

Joan Nelson—Landscapes on wood panels, combining contemporary scenes with references to Old Masters. Opens Oct. 19. Through Nov. 20. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Jackson Pollock (1912-56)—Drip paintings on paper from 1948 and 1949. Opens Oct. 13. Through Dec. 11. (C&M, 45 E. 78th St.)

Jeffrey Schiff—New sculptural work that seeks to subvert preconceived notions concerning tools. Opens Oct. 12. Through Nov. 3. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

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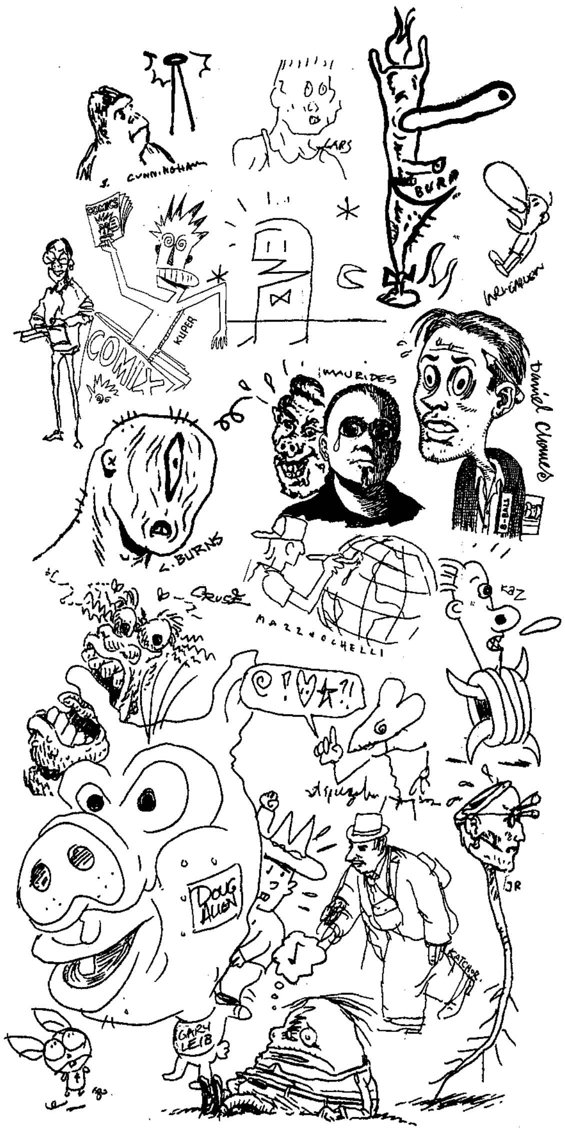
Markus Lüpertz—Lüpertz is a prominent member of that generation of German painters who put the "neo" in Neo-Expressionism. These new paintings and drawings of totemic heads represent a selection from a larger series bearing the provocative but enigmatic title "Men Without Women—Parsifal." Lüpertz's spectral, masklike visages seem far from the ethereality of the medieval Parsifal legend, but they maintain a sublime, otherworldly aspect. The brushwork is sloppy, almost brutal in its application, but that does not preclude dazzling painterly effects, as Lüpertz deftly negotiates transitions between matte and luminous surfaces. A sense of unreal light emanating from cold darkness is Lüpertz's greatest metaphoric and painterly achievement here. One head, painted in lurid bright red against a dull pale-gray ground, has a scary, martyrized appearance—more John the Baptist than Parsifal. But it's not all blood-soaked horror: a gray head against a slate-black ground smiles serenely, a "Mona Lisa" of the underworld. Through Oct. 30. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)



Doodles and self-portraits by some of the artists in "Comic Power" at Exit Art.

Alexander Archipenko (1887-1964)—Works in bronze, wood, terra-cotta, and Plexiglas. Through Nov. 13. (Adler, 41 E. 57th St.)

Hannelore Baron (1926-87)—Collages and box constructions, made between 1970 and 1987. Through Oct. 16. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Fernando Botero—Sculpture and drawings on canvas. Through Nov. 6. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.) . . . **Note:** Botero's corpulent bronze figures can be seen on the Park Avenue Mall from 54th to 61st Sts. Through Nov. 14.

Bruce Conner—This influential artist, who emerged from San Francisco's Beat culture, is represented by assemblages and collages, dating from 1959 to 1964, made of discarded material ("primitive urban art," as he calls it). Through Oct. 30. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Willem de Kooning / Jean Dubuffet (1901-85)—De Kooning's work here glows with inner light: graphic stripes of red, yellow, and blue brushwork skim resplendent white surfaces. The Dubuffets remain a much rougher affair, their lines cutting and insistent, the colors loud and confrontational. Through Oct. 16. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

"Diversities of Decoration"—More than two hundred antique Chinese snuff bottles, in materials ranging from glass to precious metals and semiprecious stones and embellished with a dazzling variety of techniques, show the ingenuity of craftsmen of the past three centuries. Some with animal themes are engagingly whimsical (a fluffy kitten is pure kitsch), but the exquisite, predictably, predominates. One bottle, in arabesque-carved amethyst, is something Dorian Gray would have traded his portrait for; it's the embodiment of Decadent taste. Through Oct. 29. (Taipei, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 49th St.)

John Duff—Recent abstract sculptures of painted fibreglass. Through Oct. 30. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Oyvind Fahlström (1928-76)—An installation titled "The Garden (A World Model)" (1973), a model for his large sculpture "The Meatball Curtain" (1970), plus "Notes"—drawings that form the basis for larger works. Through Nov. 6. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Sondra Freckelton—Watercolors of interiors with plants, fruits, and flowers. Through Oct. 16. (Davidson, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Andy Goldsworthy—Recent works by this English conceptual artist and nature walker, including a number of rather conventional text-and-photo pieces on naturalist themes and two beautiful, labor-intensive site-specific installations. Through Oct. 16. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Susan Hauptman—Pastel-and-charcoal still-lifes and self-portraits (in which the artist assumes various guises, such as a rodeo cowgirl and Carmen Miranda). Through Oct. 30. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

Edward Hopper (1882-1967)—A mini-retrospective of paintings with an emphasis on Hopper's lesser-known modernist work. Through Nov. 13. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Walter York Koenigstein—Looking at these twenty-three works in graphite on paper, all of uniform size (twenty-four inches by eighteen inches), is like flipping through one of the artist's sketchbooks. The images are bold, confident, evocative, and playful, and many are about as sensuous as nonrepresentational black and gray marks on a white surface can get. Their titles often seem intended to provoke specific reactions ("Wrong, but at the Right Time"). Koenigstein's signature is incorporated into his compositions in unconventional ways, with the letters spread out or squiggled on top of one another and positioned wherever they will have the strongest effect. Through Oct. 21. (Austrian Cultural Institute, 11 E. 52nd St.)

David Levine and Aaron Shikler—A joint exhibition of figure paintings in celebration of the nearly fifty-year friendship of the two artists. Through Nov. 6. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.; and Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Boris Margo—An exhibition of work from 1932 to 1952, revealing this Russian painter's evolution from Surrealism to abstraction. Through Nov. 13. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St.)

Grégoire Müller—Recent portraits by this Swiss artist. Through Oct. 30. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Gabor Peterdi—Vibrant landscapes from an aptly titled "Celebration" series, which this Hungarian-born artist has been working on since the sixties. Through Oct. 23. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Wallace Putnam (1899-1989)—An exhibition focussing on work from the forties, when the artist was painting in Maine with his friend and fellow-artist Milton Avery; also, a series of drawings titled "Manhattan Manners" (1930). Through Oct. 23. (Littlejohn-Sternau, 41 E. 57th St.)

Gerhard Richter—This artist's most recent abstractions include a quartet of brilliant blue-green blurs that resemble huge underwater Polaroids and a group of multicolored grid paintings that suggest greatly magnified close-ups of the weave of silk fabrics. Through Oct. 23. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Stone Roberts / Leland Bell (1922-91)—Realistic portraits and still-lifes. / Paintings from his "Morning" series, self-portraits, and other works. Through Oct. 30. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

Peter Saul—A mini-retrospective that ranges from the "Electric Chair" paintings of the sixties to a current Pop series. Through Oct. 16. (Frumkin/Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

David Smalley / Andrée Ruellan—Abstract kinetic sculptures designed to be propelled by the wind. / Works on paper, dating from 1920 to 1980, on a wide range of subjects. Through Oct. 30. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Donald Sultan—New paintings. Through Nov. 4. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

Mario Toral—Organic landscapes with floating, contorted figures by this Chilean artist. Through Oct. 23. (Americas, 1015 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

Jane Wilson—Luminous abstract landscapes in oil. Through Oct. 23. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Christie's—Lot 243 in the "Magnificent Jewels" sale has the sort of romantic, poignant provenance that sometimes surrounds personal items at auction. Madeleine Carlier, a French actress of the early nineteen-hundreds, introduced her younger sister Virginie to a wealthy automobile manufacturer, who presented Virginie with a ring. Virginie eventually married Frederick Christian Sheid, who was in the Belgian shipbuilding business, but she kept the ring—a single-stone diamond currently estimated at $50,000-$60,000. (Park Ave. at 59th St. Oct. 18 at 2 and Oct. 19 at 10 and 2. For information, call 546-1000.)

International Fine Art & Antique Dealers Show—The crème de la crème: À la Vieille Russie, Inc., Didier Aaron, Inc., Cora Ginsburg, Inc., and Brian Haughton Antiques (which has been presenting the International Ceramics Fair, in London, for fourteen years) will be on hand, with seventy-four other dealers from the United States and Europe. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Oct. 15, from 11 to 6, and Oct. 16-21, from 11 to 8. For information, call 382-0969.)

St. Ignatius Loyola Antiques Show—Look for good buys on majolica. (Wallace Hall, Park Ave. at 84th St. Oct. 15-16, from 11 to 8, and Oct. 17, from 11 to 6. Tickets available at the door.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Doing Justice

The documentary power of photography often confers upon photographers a sense of mission, a desire to open eyes and move hearts and minds to action. What's rare is a photographer who actually fulfills such ambitions. One such successful crusader was Lewis W. Hine (1874-1940), a teacher and child-welfare advocate who did his most important work with a camera. His photographs of immigrant life, child laborers, and industrial workers made a real difference in their time, and they have inspired generations of photographers who believe in their medium as a vehicle of social reform.

An informed exhibition of Hine's work, at Mann (42 East 76th Street; through November 13), is full of strong images. Hine had the ability to combine social reportage and potent composition seamlessly in a single photograph. His shots of workers up on girders during the construction of the Empire State Building are vertigo-inducing, but they also bring home the risks and dangers these men routinely faced. His 1916 portrait of children harvesting tobacco in Connecticut projects the kind of exquisite soulfulness one finds in Julia Margaret Cameron's images of Victorian children, and makes the facts of these farmworkers' lives seem all the more cruel. Most of Hine's work needs no annotation, but the gallery has included some of his accounts of the circumstances surrounding the pictures. His detailed field notes describe inhuman conditions and wretched predicaments, as well as his own difficulties in getting the facts and circumventing official denial of those facts. But the proof is in the pictures.

Robert Doisneau—A sizable retrospective, including the famous 1950 photograph "The Kiss at the Hôtel de Ville." Through Oct. 23. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

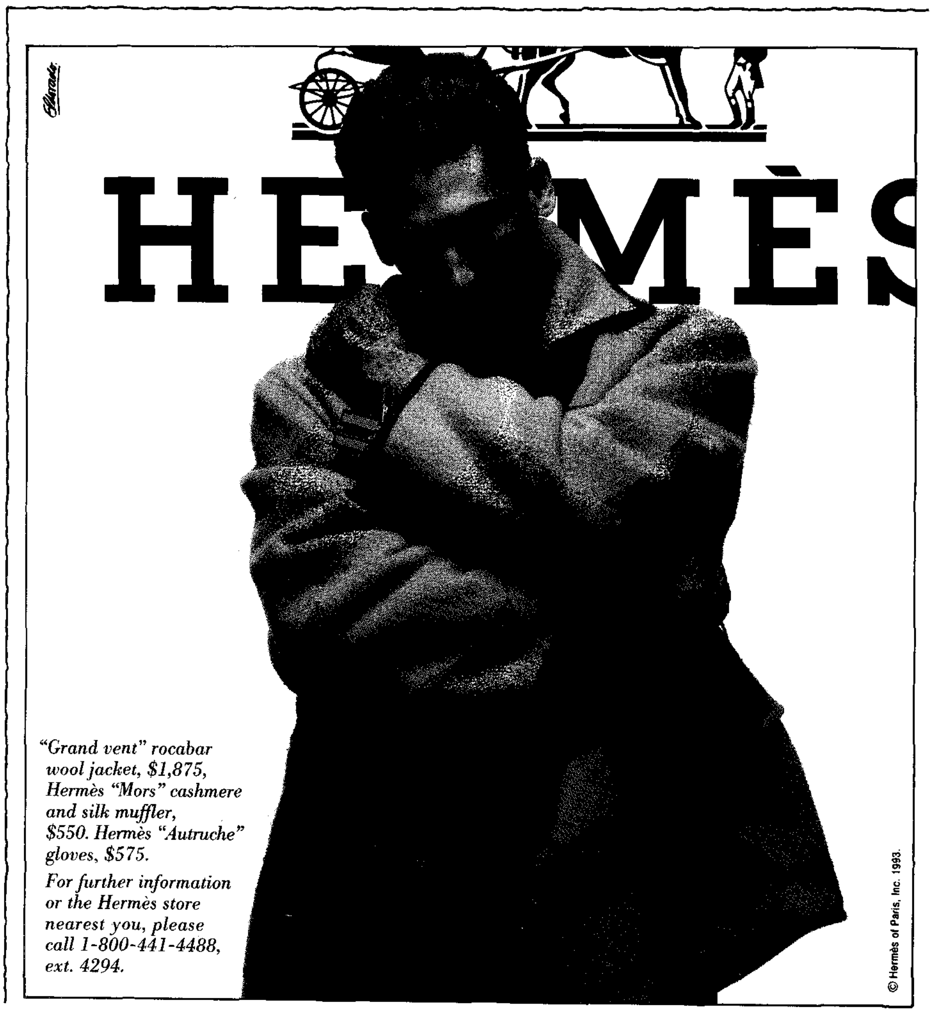
"Mesdames Morter: Striking Poses, Self-Portraits, 1918-28"—Black-and-white shots by these London-based proto-feminist sisters in a variety of lavish costumes and roles. Also on view is a show devoted to other influential women of the twenties. Through Nov. 6. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Sylvia Plachy—Recent photographs of New York street life. (Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, 120 Park Ave., at 42nd St.)

Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946)—Photographs from the collection of Georgia O'Keeffe. Through Oct. 23. (Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Cy Twombly—Twombly's photographic début features subject matter that includes tulips, trees, and Roman antiquities. Opens Oct. 15. Through Dec. 4. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Mexico Through Foreign Eyes" features more than two hundred photographs by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paul Strand, and others. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)



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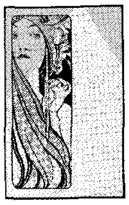

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

The Put-Down

OPERA was, at most, an ancillary concern for Sergei Rachmaninoff, who completed three one-acters before giving up on the genre for good in 1907, leaving three others in various stages of incompletion. Rachmaninoff was thirty-two in 1905, when he completed "The Miserly Knight," a nearly verbatim setting of a short drama by Pushkin, and he conducted its première the following year at the Bolshoi Theatre, along with his "Francesca da Rimini." Neither entered the repertoire. When "The Miserly Knight" is performed on October 18 at Carnegie Hall, as part of a tribute marking the fiftieth anniversary of the composer's death, it will be the work's American première.

Alexandre Rachmaninoff, the composer's grandson and an irrepressible advocate of his music, thinks he knows why "The Miserly Knight" got a rocky sendoff, and why the composer soured on opera. "It was originally composed for the great Chaliapin," he explains, "so the principal role lies in the range of a bass baritone. But one note in the score is out of that range. Instead of confessing that he could not reach that note—which I think appears five times in the opera—Chaliapin said, 'Sergei, you wrote very bad music.' And the composer was very sad. In fact he was furious, and for some years he and Chaliapin were—well, a little less friendly."

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**MADAMA BUTTERFLY,** with Yoko Watanabe, Wendy White, Richard Leech, and Lucio Gallo; conducted by Christian Badea. (Oct. 13 at 8 and Oct. 16 at 1:30.) . . . **DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE,** with Dawn Upshaw, Elizabeth Carter, Frank Lopardo, Mark Oswald, and Hans Sotin; James Levine. (Oct. 14 at 8.) . . . With Manfred Hemm as Papageno. (Oct. 18 at 8.) . . . **FIDELIO,** with Gabriela Beňačková, Marie McLaughlin, Gary Lakes, John Fowler, Robert Hale, and Hans Sotin; Hermann Michael. (Oct. 15 at 8.) . . . With Carol Yahr as Leonore. (Oct. 19 at 8.) . . . **TOSCA,** with Maria Guleghina, Emil Ivanov, and Sherrill Milnes; Julius Rudel. (Oct. 16 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

New York City Opera—**TOSCA.** (Oct. 13 at 7:30.) . . . **THE MIKADO.** (Oct. 15 at 8.) . . . **MADAMA BUTTERFLY.** (Oct. 16 at 1:30.) . . . **CARMEN.** (Oct. 16 at 8.) . . . **LA RONDINE,** a revival of the company's memorable production of Puccini's insufficiently appreciated imitation of a bittersweet Viennese operetta. (Oct. 17 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

"The Cave"—A "documentary music video theatre work" that examines the Biblical story of Abraham from the modern Israeli, Palestinian, and American viewpoints; with music by Steve Reich and video by Beryl Korot. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Oct. 13 at 7 and Oct. 14-16 at 8.)

American Chamber Opera Company—Presenting the première of Alice Shields' "Mass for the Dead," a fully staged "electronic opera" based (the company announces) "on an actual séance experienced by the composer." Conducted by Douglas Anderson. (Universalist Church, 160 Central Park W., at 76th St. Oct. 17 and Oct. 19 at 8. For information about tickets, call 781-0857. Through Oct. 24.)

Magic Circle Opera Company—Presenting "A Gypsy Carmen with Flamenco Dance," Ray Evans Harrell's adaptation of Bizet's classic; fully staged, with a chamber orchestra, Gypsy reminiscence, and flamenco dancing. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Oct. 13-16 at 7 and Oct. 17 at 3.)

Dicapo Opera Theatre—Presenting Puccini's one-act tragedy "Il Tabarro." (184 E. 76th St. Oct. 15 at 8 and Oct. 17 at 3. For information about tickets, call 288-9438.)

"The Miserly Knight"—The American première of Rachmaninoff's opera, in a concert version, with an all-male Russian cast led by bass Alexandre Baskin, and with Vladimir Ponkin conducting the New Moscow State Philharmonic Orchestra. Also on the program will be Rachmaninoff's symphonic poem "Isle of the Dead" and "Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini" (featuring pianist Anton Mordasov). (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 18 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Zdenek Macal conducts Rossini's "Semiramide" Overture, Mozart's Flute Concerto No. 1 (with James Galway), and Dvořák's Symphony No. 6. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Oct. 14 and Oct. 16 at 8, Oct. 15 at 11 A.M., and Oct. 19 at 7:30.)

New York Concert Singers—Judith Clurman directs the chorus in music by Tchaikovsky, Philip Glass (the United States première of his "Three Songs for Choir a Cappella"), Liszt (in which the chorus will be joined by baritone Kurt Ollmann and harmonium player Keith S. Toth), and Sondheim (a suite from "A Little Night Music," arranged by Paul McKibbins), among other pieces. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 13 at 8.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Otto-Werner Mueller conducts Brahms' "Tragic Overture," Liszt's Piano Concerto No. 2 (featuring Carl Cranmer), and Bruckner's Symphony No. 4. (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 13 at 8. For information about tickets, call 769-7406.)

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducting. Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 1 (featuring Krystian Zimerman) and Mahler's Symphony No. 4 (with soprano Christine Schäfer). (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 13-14 at 8.) . . . ¶ The New York première of Hans Werner Henze's Symphony No. 8, as well as Berlioz' "Benvenuto Cellini" Overture and "Symphonie Fantastique." (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 15 at 8.)

Pittsburgh Symphony—At Carnegie Hall, Lorin Maazel conducting. Oct. 15 at 8: The New York première of Penderecki's Adagio (written four years ago to commemorate the bicentennial of the French Revolution) and Brahms' Symphony No. 1. . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 8: Mahler's Symphony No. 6.

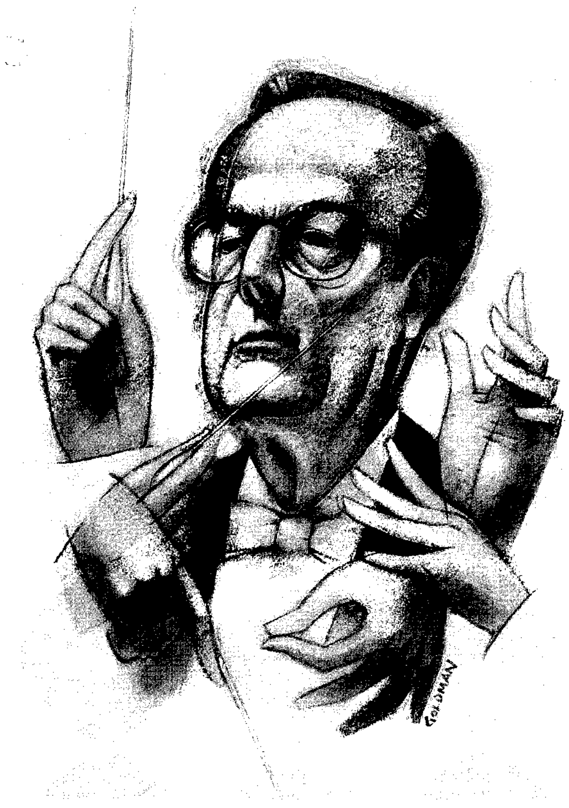
LISTENING BOOTH

The American Innovator—Alan Feinberg, pianist (Decca/Argo). The appearance of this latest volume of Feinberg's explorations of American piano music coincides with his doubleheader at the Miller Theatre on October 17. The disk contains solo works by thirteen twentieth-century American composers of diverse styles, linked only by their proclivity for experimentation. Feinberg is expert in devising compelling programs of this sort, and he executes them brilliantly, as is clear from his previous Decca/Argo releases, "The American Romantic" and "The American Virtuoso."

Philharmonia Virtuosi—Richard Kapp conducts Bach's First Orchestral Suite and Bernstein's Serenade (featuring violinist Maria Bachmann); Igor Blazhkov assumes the podium to lead a chamber ensemble, drawn from the orchestra's ranks, in the American première of Ukrainian composer Dmitri Klebanov's "Japanese Silhouettes for Soprano, Viola d'Amore, and Ensemble" (with soprano Natalia Biorro and viola d'amore player Mela Tenenbaum). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. Oct. 16 at 7.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts Frank Martin's "Petite Symphonie Concertante," Bartók's Divertimento, and Beethoven's Violin Concerto (with Miriam Fried). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Oct. 16 at 8 and Oct. 17 at 3.)

Choral Symphony Society—David Labovitz directs Bach's Cantatas No. 72 and No. 93, in addition to works by Schütz and Handel. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Oct. 17 at 2. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)



Wolfgang Sawallisch conducts Britten's "War Requiem" at Carnegie Hall.

Pomerium—Alexander Blachly directs his twelve singers in sacred works by Orlande de Lassus (including his celebrated six-part motet "Timor et Tremor") and William Byrd (including several of his "Cantiones Sacrae" motets and his Mass in Three Voices). Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-0675. Oct. 17 at 4.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Wolfgang Sawallisch leads Britten's monumental "War Requiem," with soprano Carol Vaness, tenor John Aler, bass-baritone John Shirley-Quirk, the Westminster Symphonic Choir, and the Philadelphia Boys Choir. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 19 at 8.)

Concert Royal—James Richman traces the influence of Italian music in Baroque Europe, including excerpts from Book Seven of Monteverdi's Madrigals, Locatelli's "Il Pianto d'Arianna," Bach's Cantata No. 209 ("Non sa che sia dolore"), and Handel's "Il Delirio Amoroso," among other works; with sopranos Christine Brandes and Patrice Michaels Bedi. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 19 at 8.)

BART GOLDMAN

RECITALS

BARQ 3—That's short for "Baroque trio"—of violin, gamba, and theorbo—which will perform Renaissance and Baroque music from England. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Oct. 13 at 6:30. Admission by contribution.)

Bargemusic—Pianist Sung-Mi Im performs Mozart's C-Minor Sonata (K. 457); violinist Theodore Arm joins her for Beethoven's "Spring" Sonata; and cellist Warren Lash completes the ensemble for Shostakovich's E-Minor Piano Trio (Op. 67). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Oct. 14 at 7:30 and Oct. 17 at 4.)

Speculum Musicae—The contemporary-music ensemble pays tribute to Elliott Carter, who will celebrate his eighty-fifth birthday later this season. The program alights on five of the composer's works from the past two decades: "Changes" (for guitar), "Trilogy" (for harp and oboe, with harpist Ursula Holliger), Quintet for Piano and Winds, "Gra" (for clarinet), and "Penthode." (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 14 at 8.)

Off the Cuff—Improvisations. Oct. 14 at 8: Interactions among Steve Cohn (playing piano and shakuhachi), Oliver Lake (saxophone), Tom Varner (French horn), Jason Hwang (violin), and Fred Hopkins (bass). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799.) . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 9: Derek Bailey (guitar), Gregg Bendian (percussion), and friends. (Roulette, 228 West Broadway. 219-8242.)

Mannes Trio—In a program of Chopin, John Anthony Lennon ("Sirens"), and Ravel. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 580-0210. Oct. 15 at 8.)

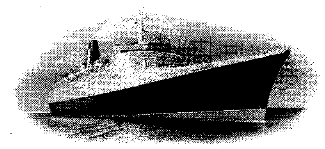
Consort of Musicke—At the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. (921-2939): Oct. 15 at 8: Lutenist Anthony Rooley joins sopranos Emma Kirkby and Evelyn Tubb to perform an all-English program, including solos and duets by John Blow and Henry Purcell. . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 8: Early Baroque madrigals by Monteverdi, Sigismondo d'India, and others.

Tokyo String Quartet—Performing an all-Beethoven program. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Oct. 16 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

New York Baroque Trio—Trio sonatas for recorders, by Corelli, Vivaldi, and Telemann. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. Oct. 17 at 11:30 A.M. Admission is free, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Members of the orchestra perform a concerto a cinque by Johann Wilhelm Hertel; de Falla's Harpsichord Concerto (featuring Lionel Party); Milhaud's Sonata for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, and Piano; and Dvořák's Piano Quartet in E-Flat (Op. 87). (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 17 at 3.)

Alan Feinberg and Susan Narucki—The pianist and the soprano collaborate in a daylong exploration of the byways of lesser-known American repertoire. Oct. 17 at 3: A solo recital by Mr. Feinberg, ranging through works of Gottschalk (including the composer's signature piece, "The Union," chockablock with mid-nineteenth-century patriotic tunes, sometimes in counterpoint), MacDowell, Amy Beach, Robert Helps, Shulamit Ran, and Percy Grainger (all right, he was born in Australia, but he lived for years in Westchester). . . . At 7:30: Songs and piano solos by Foster, Ives, Joplin, Amy Beach, John Alden Carpenter, Henry Burleigh, Griffes, Duke Ellington, Donald Martino, David Rakowski, Copland, Cage, Ruth Crawford Seeger, and George Edwards.



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CUNARD

46A

(Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. A single ticket is good for both concerts.)

Timothy Smith—The organist, recently named music director of the Riverside Church, performs works by Bach, Mendelssohn, Franck, Larry King, Peter Eben, and Maurice Duruflé. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. Oct. 17 at 4. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

"Guitar Among Others"—The chamber-music series opens with works by Bach, Mauro Giuliani, Manuel Ponce, and others, performed by flutist Suzanne Gilchrest, classical guitarist Winslow Browning, and harpsichordist David Shuler. (Church of St. Luke in the Fields, 487 Hudson St. Oct. 17 at 4. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

New York Festival of Song—Soprano Karen Holvik, mezzo-soprano Jennifer Lane, baritone Christopher Trakas, and pianist Michael Barrett perform songs by women, including Fanny Mendelssohn, Clara Wieck Schumann, Lili Boulanger, Cécile Chaminade, and Rebecca Clarke. (Greenwich House, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. Oct. 17 at 5.)

Mordechai Rechtman—The bassoonist, familiar to aficionados of the instrument through his long tenure in the principal's chair of the Israel Philharmonic, performs with his son, the pianist Ilan Rechtman, who organizes the weekly chamber-music recitals in this comfortable upstairs salon. On the program are works by Mozart and Beethoven. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Oct. 17 at 6. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Robert White and Samuel Sanders—The tenor and the pianist perform a wide-ranging recital that includes Baroque songs and arias, twentieth-century art songs, six of Beethoven's folk-song settings, and fifteen songs written by Geoffrey Molyneux Palmer, as settings for James Joyce's "Chamber Music." (Palmer, an Irish composer, was born the same year as Joyce—1882.) Violinist Cho-Liang Lin and cellist Fred Sherry assist. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Oct. 18 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Barbara Bonney—Soprano, with pianist Warren Jones, singing songs by Schumann, Zemlinsky, Grieg, Strauss, and Barber (his "Hermit Songs"). (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 19 at 8.)

Partita Chamber Ensemble—Performing works by Poulenc, Mozart, Villa-Lobos, and a première by Myron Fink. (Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Oct. 19 at 8.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Giants—Vs. the Philadelphia Eagles, Oct. 17 at 1.

Jets—Away until Oct. 24, when they'll face the Buffalo Bills.

Islanders—The home opener is Oct. 16 at 7:10, against the Devils. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Oct. 19 at 7:30.

Rangers—Vs. the Quebec Nordiques, Oct. 13. . . . ¶ Vs. the Anaheim Mighty Ducks (really), Oct. 19. (Game time, 7:30.)

Devils—Away until Oct. 20, when they'll face the Anaheim Mighty Ducks.

(The Jets and the Giants play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111; the Islanders at Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; the Rangers at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

Championship Billiards—The sixteenth annual U.S. Open pocket billiards tournament, featuring defending women's champion Loree Jon Jones and three-time winner Ray Martin, begins on Oct. 13. (The Pennsylvania Ramada Grand Ballroom, 401 Seventh Ave., at 33rd St. For more information, call 674-8855.)

FOR KIDS

A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.

Bronx Hayride—A harvest festival at the New York Botanical Garden promises a crafts fair, live country music, square dancing, a scarecrow exhibition, pumpkin painting, and lots of apple-related carryings-on. (1-718 817-8700. Oct. 16-17, from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Children under six are admitted free.)

Spy Craft—The Children's Museum of Manhattan offers a workshop on codes, complete with discussion of secret agents. Young cryptographers will be able to put their newfound skills to use in the museum's "Great Stuff!" exhibit. For ages six and up. (212 W. 83rd St. 721-1234. Oct. 16-17 at 1, 2, and 3.)

All Aboard—Metro-North Commuter Railroad is holding an open house at its repair shop in Croton-Harmon on Oct. 16, from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. Guides will lead tours of the shop, which is the size of four football fields, and kids and other train buffs can see electric cars, diesel engines, boxcars, cranes, drill presses, spike pullers, rail cutters, and other pieces of railroad equipment, as well as demonstrations of signal systems, air brakes, safety procedures, and the like. Participants can also hop a free round-trip "foliage train," which travels north along the Hudson for seventeen miles. Hudson-line Metro-North trains will leave Grand Central for Croton-Harmon twice an hour on Oct. 16; buses will meet all trains and will shuttle visitors to and from the repair shop, two minutes away. (For more information, call 532-4900.)

Poetry on Tap—A program on the poets Gwendolyn Brooks, Langston Hughes, and Nikki Giovanni, among others. Recommended ages: eight to twelve. (125th Street Branch of the New York Public Library, 224 E. 125th St. Oct. 15 at 4:30. No tickets necessary, but preregistration is required; call 534-5050.)

Dramatics—On Saturdays and Sundays the Little People's Theatre Company presents "The Three Little Pigs," at 1:30, and "Snow White," at 3. (Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 765-9540.)

Story Time—Carly Simon reads from her book "The Nighttime Chauffeur," Oct. 16 at 2. . . . Charles Grodin reads from his book "Freddie the Fly," Oct. 17 at 1. . . . Chaim Potok reads from his first book for children, "The Tree of Here," Oct. 18 at 7. (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 82nd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Rosa Guy, author of a number of young-adult novels, will read from her own work, in a program geared toward teenagers. (West Side Y, 5 W. 63rd St. Oct. 16 at 2. No tickets necessary. Seating on a first-come, first-served basis.)

CALEF BROWN

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Oh Henry!—Ten days of performances mark the hundredth anniversary of the Henry Street Settlement, celebrated in the Nations of New York Arts Festival. Highlights: Oct. 14 and 16 at 7:30: Nikolais and Murray Louis Dance company will present "Imago: The City Curious." . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 7:30: Blondell Cummings and Richard Elovich in a performance-art double bill. . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 7: "Drumfire," with the CASYM Steel Orchestra, Pepe Santana with Inkhay, Les Ballets Africains du Papa Ladji Camara, and La Troupe Makandal, in a world-music evening with a percussive twist. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 598-0400. Through Oct. 24.)

Salaam—The American Museum of Natural History celebrates India's cultural heritage on Oct. 16, with an autumn festival complete with live performances of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music and folk dances, a discussion of the country's present-day political unrest, and a talk about traditional arts, titled "Let Our Gods Speak." (Central Park W. at 79th St. For schedule, call 769-5310.)

Where Were You in '68?—Former student activists and administrators will talk about N.Y.U. as it was a quarter century ago. Documentaries and archival film clips will be screened. (New York University, Bobst Library, 70 Washington Sq. S. Oct. 14 at 6:30. No tickets necessary, but reservations are required; 998-2641.) . . . ¶ While Bob Dylan was down on Fourth Street protesting the war, Toby Hughes was flying a fighter plane in Vietnam and writing songs with lyrics like "Come along, boys, and I'll tell you a tale / Of the pilots who fly on the Ho Chi Minh Trail." Hughes and fellow Vietnam veterans Chip Dockery and Chuck Rosenberg will perform their own protest songs, and songs written by others who served in Vietnam, on Oct. 16 at 8:30. A free lecture titled "Music of Americans in the Vietnam War" will precede the performance, at 7:30. (Loeb Student Center Auditorium, New York University, Washington Sq. and LaGuardia Pl. For information about tickets, call 529-1955.)

Tea and Tunes—Sol Yaged, Vince Giordano, and a rhythm section will put a little swing in your step at the Chartwell Booksellers tea dance. (Park Avenue Plaza Arcade, 55 E. 52nd St. Oct. 16, from 3 to 6. No tickets necessary.)

People Who Need Memorabilia—Looking for Vol. 2, No. 2 of *Barbra*, the official magazine of the Barbra Streisand Fan Club? How about a piece of the curtain from the old Metropolitan Opera House for the opera buff in your life? These items are available, along with hundreds of records, cassettes, Playbill programs, and photographs, at the annual Performing Arts Bazaar. (New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. Oct. 17, from 10:30 to 4. Tickets at the door on the day of the event.)

Just Desserts—Sharpen that sweet tooth for National Dessert Day, when the United States Pastry Team, a group of three chefs who represent the States in international pastry competitions, will offer samples of the most sinful dessert. Among the celebrities heading up dessert-tasting tables will be the Shirelles, Storm Field, and Kaity Tong. They will be paired with chefs, including Mayor Dinkins' chef, Chris Nicolelis, and David Brawley, of Tavern on the Green. (Empire Hotel, 44 W. 63rd St. Oct. 14 at 6:30. For information about tickets, call 627-2308.)

Induction—During a Vespers service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Dana Gioia, Daniel Hoffman, Alfred Kazin, and Richard Wilbur will read from the works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Stephen Crane, who will be inducted into the Cathedral's Poets' Corner. (Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Oct. 17 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Captive Audiences—Oct. 13 at 6: Brian Keenan, an Irish poet whose kidnapping in Beirut was the basis for the play "Someone Who'll Watch Over Me," will be interviewed by Andrew Whitley of Middle East Watch, a human-rights organization. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 8: Terry Waite, who was taken hostage in Lebanon in 1987, will talk about his work as a high-risk conflict mediator. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Angels—Tony Kushner, Terrence McNally, Gloria Naylor, Grace Paley, Stephen Sondheim, and Danitra Vance will read from their own work in a benefit for the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies. (City University Graduate Center Auditorium, 33 W. 42nd St. 642-2924. Oct. 15 at 6.)

Union Square Artists—More than sixty artists will open the doors to their studios on Oct. 16-17, from 11 to 5, for browsing, conversation, and demonstrations. A list of artists and floor locations will be available at 41 Union Sq. W. No tickets necessary.

Handmade—Hands Create America, a crafts exposition, will feature Raku firing, blacksmithing, and sheepshearing, in addition to performances by Ralph Lee's Masked Mime Troop. Several thousand traditional handcrafted items will also be on display. (Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Oct. 14, from noon to 6:30; Oct. 15-16, from 10 to 6:30; and Oct. 17, from 10 to 5. No tickets necessary.)

Mitty Meets Bundy—Scott Smith will read from his first novel, "A Simple Plan," whose observant narrator, a Walter Mitty type, turns into a Ted Bundy type. Amanda Filipacchi and Dale Peck will read from their own first novels. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Oct. 13 at 8.)

Artists Talk—Oct. 15 at 7: Erika Rothenberg, who makes greeting cards that convey political messages, will talk about her work. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. No charge beyond museum contribution. Free tickets, which are required, are available at 6 at the museum's Edward John Noble Education Center.) . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 6: The art critic John Gruen will interview James Rosenquist. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949.)

Readings—Oct. 13 at 7: Adrienne Rich will read from her own work. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Sq. S., at Macdougal St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 7:30: Eavan Boland and Sapphire will read from their own poetry. (Speyer Auditorium, University Settlement, 184 Eldridge St., at Rivington St. Admission by contribution.) . . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 8: Richard Rodriguez and Patricia Smith will read from their own work. (Universalist Church, 160 Central Park W., at 76th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 6: George Plimpton will interview lawyer and writer Louis Auchincloss. At 8:30, Auchincloss and Mavis Gallant will read from their own fiction. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 8: A reading of "They," a new play by Arnold Weinstein. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 6: Göran Sonnevi will read from his own poetry, in Swedish. Rika Lesser will read her English translations of his work. (Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.)

Tours & Walks—Oct. 16 at noon and 2:30: Big Onion Walking Tours takes the ferry to Governors Island. For more information, call 439-1090. . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 1: Radical Walking Tours heads to Harlem. For more information, call 1-718 492-0069. . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 1: Walk of the Town will lead a tour tracing the politics and personalities of New York's hundred and six mayors. For more information, call 222-5343. . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 2: The Transit Museum goes down under, to give a tour of the abandoned City Hall station. For more information, call 1-718 330-5839.

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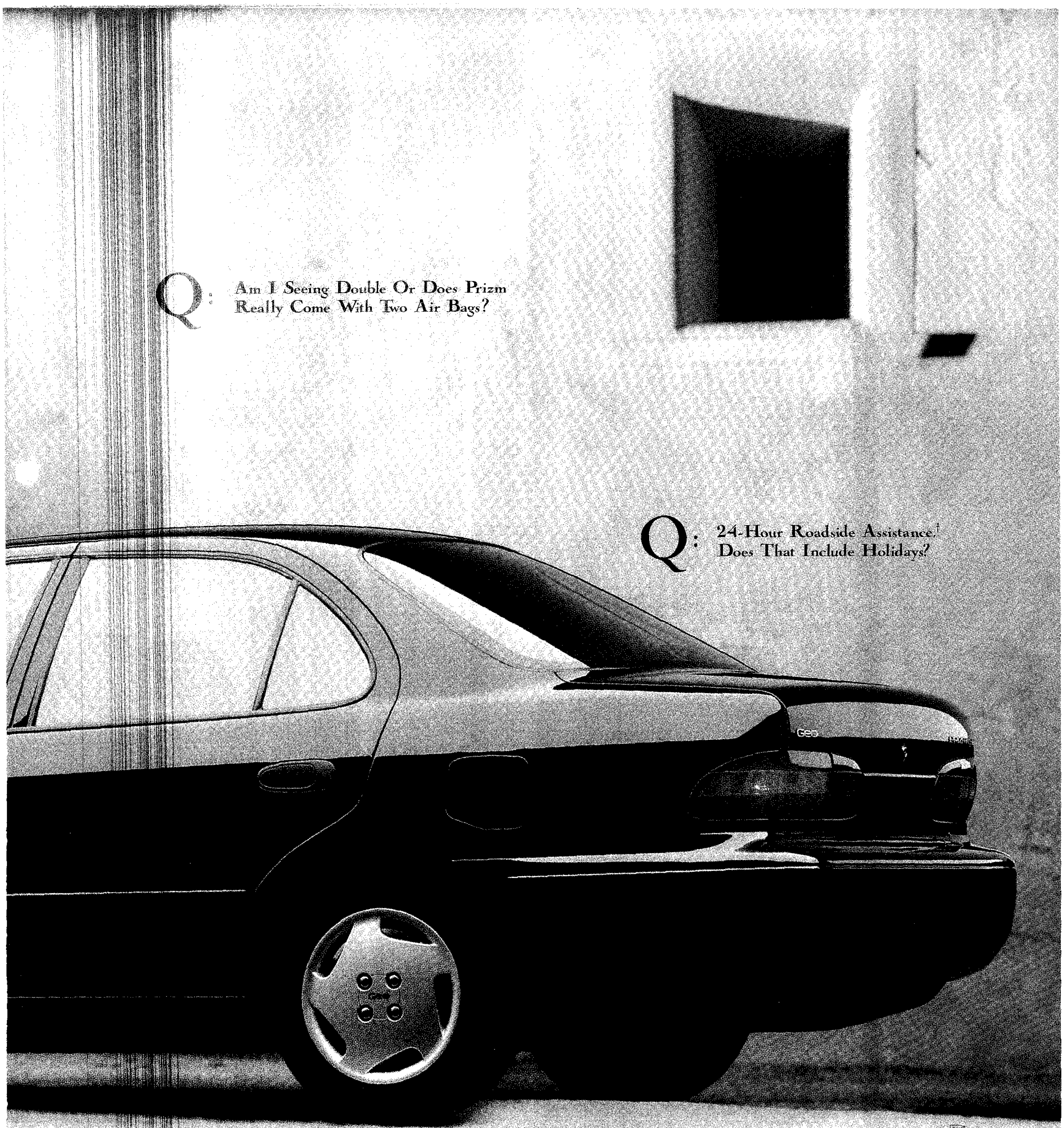
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
17	18	19	13	14	15	16

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 36.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: “Household Saints” (directed by Nancy Savoca), with Tracey Ullman.

Theatre 2: “Ruby in Paradise” (Victor Nuñez).

Theatre 3: Through Oct. 14: “Orlando” (Sally Potter). From Oct. 15: “Farewell My Concubine” (†).

Theatre 4: Through Oct. 14: “Wittgenstein” (Derek Jarman). From Oct. 15: “Farewell My Concubine” (†).

Theatre 5: “Like Water for Chocolate” (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).

Theatre 6: “The Wedding Banquet” (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

“Story of a Cheat” (†).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 14: “Manhattan Murder Mystery” (Woody Allen). From Oct. 15: “Mr. Wonderful” (Anthony Minghella).

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 14: “True Romance” (Tony Scott). From Oct. 15: “The Beverly Hillbillies” (Penelope Spheeris).

Theatre 3: “Mr. Jones” (Mike Figgis).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)

Theatre 1: “Demolition Man” (Marco Brambilla).

Theatre 2: “A Bronx Tale” (†).

Theatre 3: “M. Butterfly” (†).

Theatre 4: “Malice” (†).

Theatre 5: “The Age of Innocence” (†).

Theatre 6: “Dazed and Confused” (†).

Theatre 7: “The Age of Innocence” (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

“Police Story III: Supercop” (Stanley Tong; in Cantonese, with English and Chinese subtitles).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)

Theatre 1: “Freaked” (Alex Winter and Tom Stern), with Winter.

Theatre 2: “The Joy Luck Club” (†).

Theatre 3: “Gettysburg” (Ronald F. Maxwell).

Theatre 4: Through Oct. 14: “Gettysburg.” From Oct. 15: “Inside Monkey Zetterland” (†).

Theatre 5: “The Program” (†).

Theatre 6: “Cool Runnings” (†).

Theatre 7: “Baraka” (Mark Magidson and Ron Fricke).

19th Street East 6, B’way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: “Cool Runnings” (†).

Theatre 2: “Rudy” (David Anspaugh).

Theatre 3: “Mr. Jones” (Mike Figgis).

Theatre 4: “True Romance” (Tony Scott).

Theatre 5: “The Fugitive” (Andrew Davis).

Theatre 6: “The Joy Luck Club” (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

Through Oct. 14: “Striking Distance” (Rowdy Herrington), with Bruce Willis.

From Oct. 15: “Judgment Night” (Stephen Hopkins).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)

Theatre 1: “Malice” (†).

Theatre 2: “Sleepless in Seattle” (Nora Ephron).

Theatre 3: “The Program” (†).

Theatre 4: “Cool Runnings” (†).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: “Mr. Nanny” (Michael Gottlieb).

Theatre 2: “Demolition Man” (Marco Brambilla).

Theatre 3: “The Fugitive” (Andrew Davis).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

Through Oct. 14: “For Love or Money” (†).

From Oct. 15: “The Beverly Hillbillies” (Penelope Spheeris).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

Through Oct. 14: “Like Water for Chocolate” (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).

From Oct. 15: “Farewell My Concubine” (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Theatre 1: “Tim Burton’s The Nightmare Before Christmas” (Henry Selick).

Theatre 2: “Tim Burton’s The Nightmare Before Christmas.”

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

“The Good Son” (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

“Baraka” (Mark Magidson and Ron Fricke).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 14: “Striking Distance” (Rowdy Herrington). From Oct. 15: “Judgment Night” (Stephen Hopkins).

Theatre 2: “Jurassic Park” (Steven Spielberg).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

“For Love or Money” (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: “Manhattan Murder Mystery” (Woody Allen).

Theatre 2: “The Age of Innocence” (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: “Short Cuts” (†).

Theatre 2: “The Joy Luck Club” (†).

Theatre 3: “Short Cuts” (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)

Theatre 1: “Demolition Man” (Marco Brambilla).

Theatre 2: “Demolition Man.”

Theatre 3: “Mr. Jones” (Mike Figgis).

Theatre 4: Through Oct. 14: “Mr. Jones.” From Oct. 15: “The Beverly Hillbillies” (Penelope Spheeris).

Theatre 5: “M. Butterfly” (†).

Theatre 6: “M. Butterfly” (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: “The Fugitive” (Andrew Davis).

Theatre 2: “Rudy” (David Anspaugh).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

“A Bronx Tale” (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: “True Romance” (Tony Scott).

Theatre 2: “Malice” (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

“King of the Hill” (Steven Soderbergh).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

Through Oct. 14: “Bopha!” (Morgan Freeman).

From Oct. 15: “Fearless” (Peter Weir).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

“Mr. Nanny” (Michael Gottlieb).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)

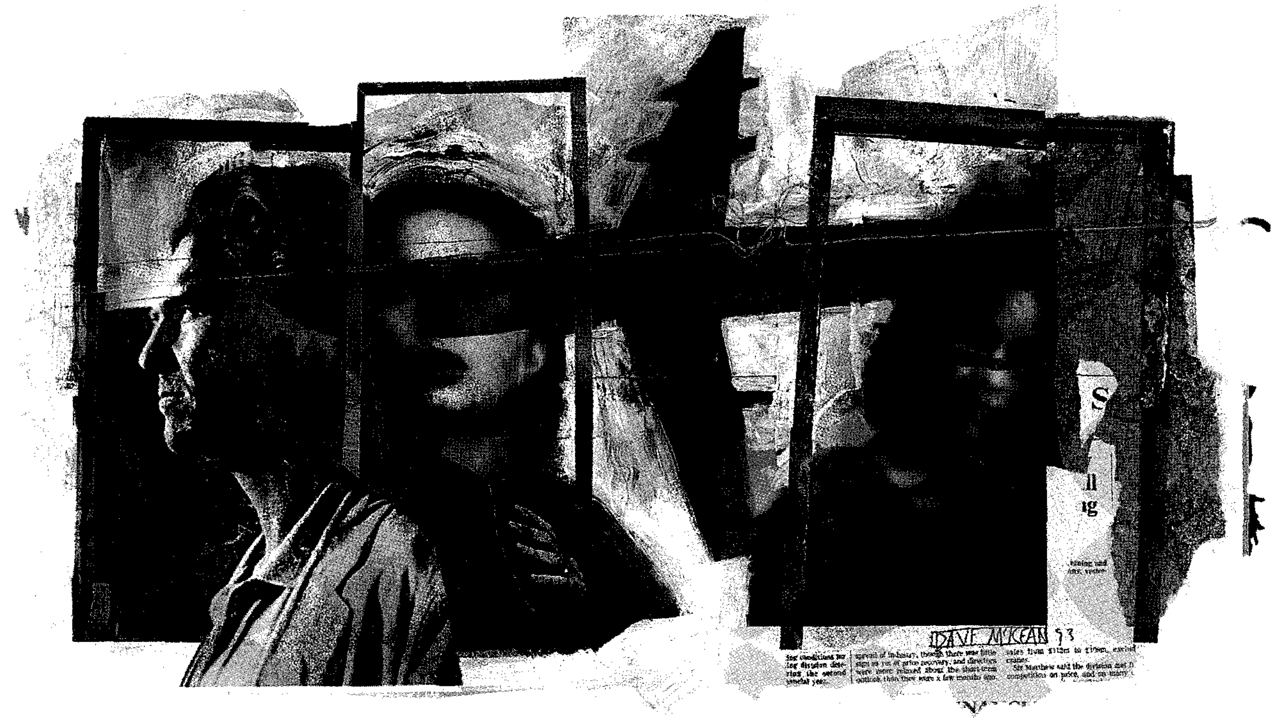
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 14: “The Good Son” (†). From Oct. 15: “Judgment Night” (Stephen Hopkins).

Theatre 2: “Malice” (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)

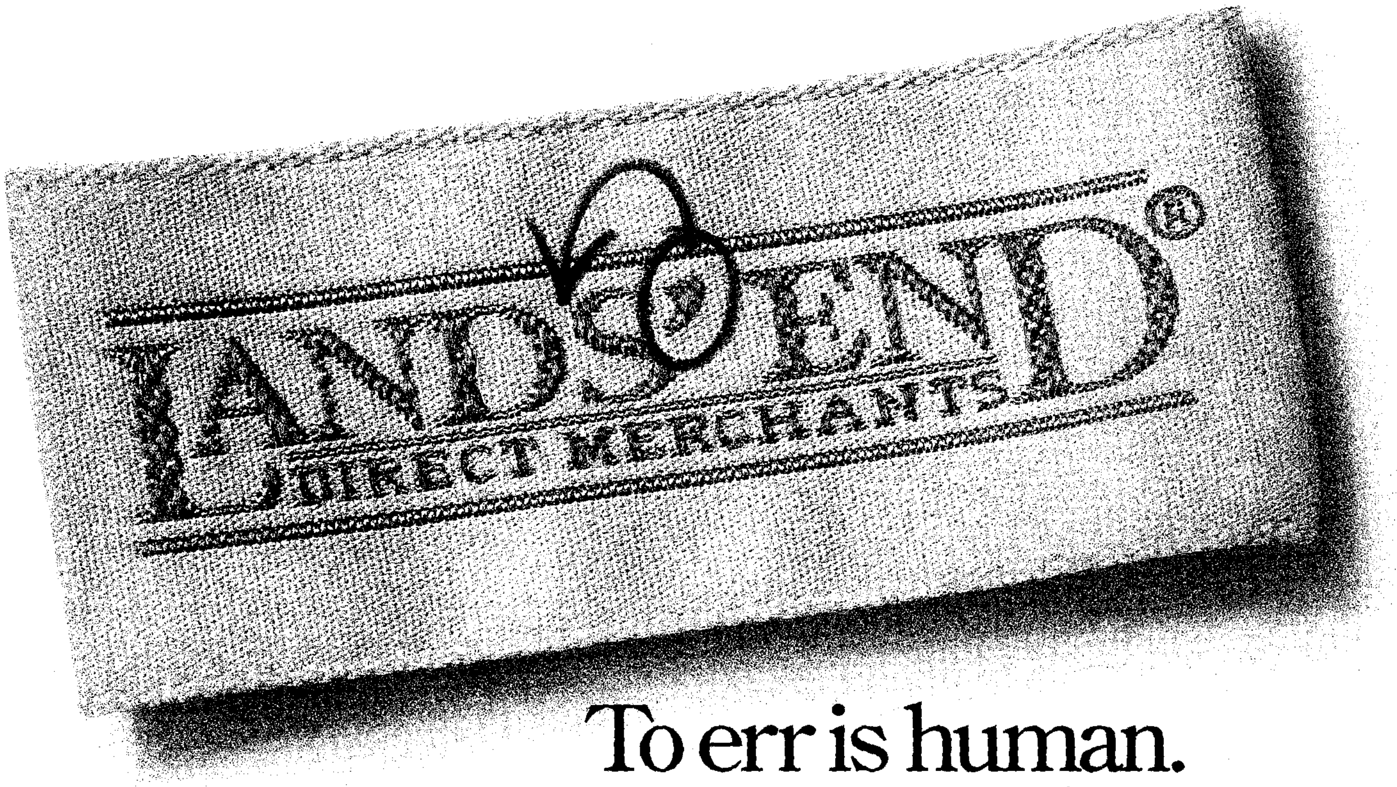
Theatre 1: “Mr. Jones” (Mike Figgis).

Theatre 2: “Striking Distance” (Rowdy Herrington), with Bruce Willis.



Opening October 15, Jeff Bridges, Isabella Rossellini, and Rosie Perez in “Fearless.”

DAVE MCKEAN



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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Theatre 3: "A Bronx Tale" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis).
Theatre 5: "The Age of Innocence" (†).
Theatre 6: "Demolition Man" (Marco Brambilla).
Theatre 7: "Cool Runnings" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Program" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Half Japanese: The Band That Would Be King" (directed by Jeff Feuerzeig), a documentary.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 16: "The Earrings of Madame de . . ." (1953, Max Ophuls; in French). From Oct. 17: "It's All True: Based on an Unfinished Film by Orson Welles" (Richard Wilson).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Deadfall" (Christopher Coppola).
Theatre 2: "For Love or Money" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Avenue at 12th Street. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 14: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis). From Oct. 15: "Judgment Night" (Stephen Hopkins).
Theatre 2: "The Good Son" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Bad Behavior" (Les Blair).
Theatre 2: "King of the Hill" (Steven Soderbergh).
Theatre 3: "Into the West" (†) and "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh).
Theatre 4: "Betty" (Claude Chabrol; in French).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "The Good Son" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Bronx Tale" (†).
Theatre 3: "Demolition Man" (Marco Brambilla).
Theatre 4: Through Oct. 14: "A Bronx Tale" (†). From Oct. 15: "Judgment Night" (Stephen Hopkins).
Theatre 5: "Malice" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Oct. 14: "Demolition Man." From Oct. 15: "The Beverly Hillbillies" (Penelope Spheeris).
Theatre 7: "Dazed and Confused" (†).
Theatre 8: "Malice" (†).
Theatre 9: "For Love or Money" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Secret Garden" (Agnieszka Holland); and "In the Line of Fire" (Wolfgang Petersen), with Clint Eastwood and John Malkovich.
Theatre 2: "The Program" (†).
Theatre 3: "Warlock: The Armageddon" (Anthony Hickox); and "Jurassic Park" (Steven Spielberg).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"The Joy Luck Club" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "The Man Without a Face" (Mel Gibson); and "Into the West" (†).
Theatre 2: "Bad Behavior" (Les Blair).
Theatre 3: "Jurassic Park" (Steven Spielberg).
Theatre 4: "Sleepless in Seattle" (Nora Ephron).
Theatre 5: "Free Willy" (Simon Wincer).
Theatre 6: "Manhattan Murder Mystery" (Woody Allen).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Age of Innocence" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Police Story III: Supercop" (Stanley Tong).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Searching for Bobby Fischer" (Steven Zaillian).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "Deadfall" (Christopher Coppola).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"On the Bridge" (Frank Perry), a documentary.

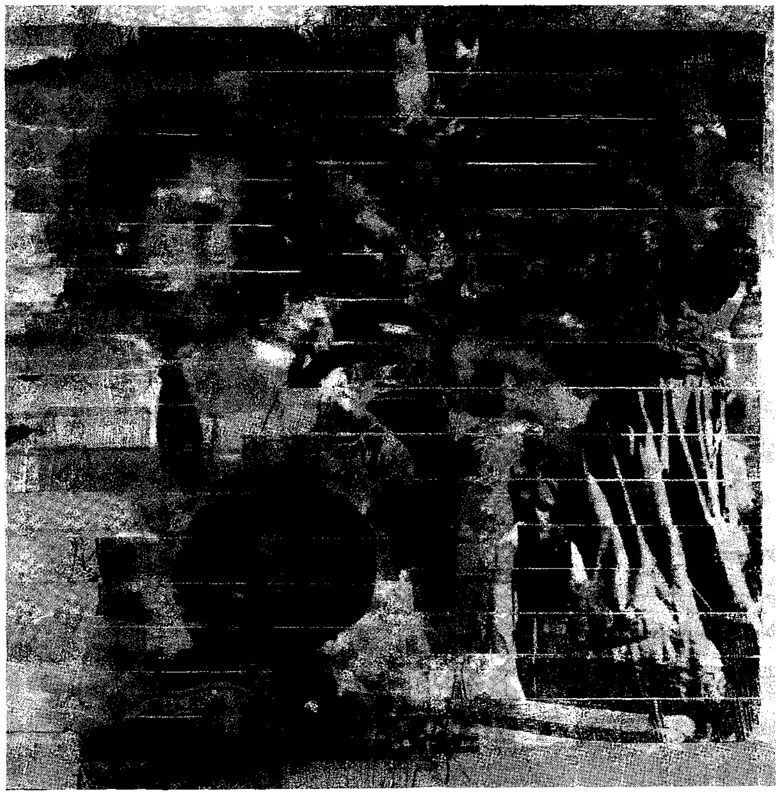
Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Jamón Jamón" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"The Wedding Banquet" (†).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Gettysburg" (Ronald F. Maxwell).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"For Love or Money" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 14: "Orlando" (Sally Potter). From Oct. 15: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Wedding Banquet" (†).
Theatre 3: "Ruby in Paradise" (Victor Nuñez), with Ashley Judd.
Theatre 4: Through Oct. 14: "Much Ado About Nothing" (Kenneth Branagh). From Oct. 15: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).



Opening October 17, "It's All True: Based on an Unfinished Film by Orson Welles."

STEPHEN KRONINGER

Theatre 5: "Household Saints" (Nancy Savoca).
Theatre 6: "Ruby in Paradise."

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"The Good Son" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Rudy" (David Anspaugh).
Theatre 2: "M. Butterfly" (†).
Theatre 3: "Malice" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Joy Luck Club" (†).
Theatre 5: "A Bronx Tale" (†).
Theatre 6: "Demolition Man" (Marco Brambilla).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through Oct. 14: "Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington). From Oct. 15: "The Beverly Hillbillies" (Penelope Spheeris).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 14: "Mr. Jones" (Mike Figgis). From Oct. 15: "Judgment Night" (Stephen Hopkins).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Cool Runnings" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Demolition Man" (directed by Marco Brambilla).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 14: "Warlock: The Armageddon" (Anthony Hickox). From Oct. 15: "Mr. Wonderful" (Anthony Minghella).
Theatre 3: "Mr. Nanny" (Michael Gottlieb).
Theatre 4: "The Good Son" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis).
Theatre 6: "Mr. Jones" (Mike Figgis).
Theatre 7: "A Bronx Tale" (†).

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through Oct. 14: "The Program" (†).
From Oct. 15: "The Beverly Hillbillies" (Penelope Spheeris).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Cool Runnings" (†).
Theatre 2: "In the Line of Fire" (Wolfgang Petersen).
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 14: "The Firm" (Sydney Pollack). From Oct. 15: "The Program" (†).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Striking Distance" (Rowdy Herrington).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Malice" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 14: "For Love or Money" (†). From Oct. 15: "Judgment Night" (Stephen Hopkins).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through the afternoon of Oct. 14: "Platinum Blonde" (1931, directed by Frank Capra); and "Three Wise Girls" (1932, William Beaudine).
Oct. 14 (at 7): "Hell's Angels" (1930, Howard Hughes and James Whale); and "The Saturday Night Kid" (1929, Edward Sutherland).
Oct. 15 through the afternoon of Oct. 18: "Red Dust" (1932, Victor Fleming) and "Hold Your Man" (1935, Sam Wood).
Oct. 18 (evening only): "Goldie" (1931, Benjamin Stoloff), with Jean Harlow.
From Oct. 19: "Secret Six" (1931, George Hill) and "Iron Man" (1931, Tod Browning).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through Oct. 16: "The Last Detail" (1974, Hal Ashby) and "A Few Good Men" (1992, Rob Reiner), with Jack Nicholson.
Oct. 17-19: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" (1975, Miloš Forman) and "The King of Marvin Gardens" (1972, Bob Rafelson).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
Through Oct. 14: "The Asphalt Jungle" (†); and "The Killing" (1956, Stanley Kubrick).
Oct. 15-16: "The Fugitive Kind" (1960, Sidney Lumet) and "Last Tango in Paris" (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in French and English).
Oct. 17-18: "Remember the Night" (1940, Mitchell Leisen) and "Christmas in Connecticut" (1945, Peter Godfrey).
Oct. 19: "Carnival in Flanders" (1936, Jacques Feyder; in French); and "Boudu Saved from Drowning" (1931, Jean Renoir; in French).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Oct. 13: "The Children's Hour" (1962, William Wyler); and "Toys in the Attic" (†).
Oct. 14: "Barry Lyndon" (1975, Stanley Kubrick).
Oct. 15-16: "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1951, Elia Kazan) and "The Long, Hot Summer" (1958, Martin Ritt).
Oct. 17: "Horse Feathers" (1932, Norman McLeod), and "The Cocoanuts" (1929, Joseph Santley and Robert Florey).
Oct. 18: "Masculine Feminine" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French); and "A Married Woman" (1965, Godard; in French).

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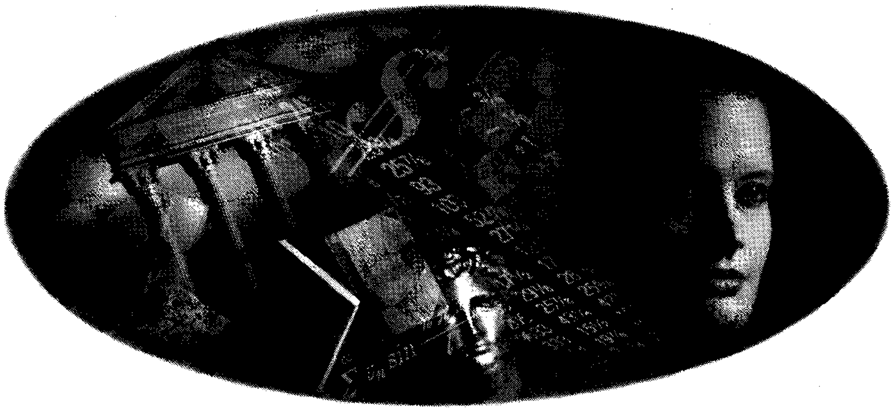

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Oct. 19: "Women in Love" (1970, Ken Russell); and "Sons and Lovers" (1960, Jack Cardiff).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films with Lillian Gish. Oct. 14 at 2:30 and Oct. 19 at 6: "Orphans in the Storm" (†).... Oct. 14 at 6:30: "Lillian Gish: The Actor's Life for Me" (1988), a documentary.... Oct. 15 at 2:30 and Oct. 17 at 5: "The Scarlet Letter" (1926, directed by Victor Sjöström; silent).... Oct. 15 at 6 and Oct. 18 at 2:30: "The Unforgiven" (1960, John Huston).... Oct. 16 at 2: "The Night of the Hunter" (1955, Charles Laughton).... Oct. 16 at 5 and Oct. 19 at 2:30: "A Wedding" (1978, Robert Altman).... Oct. 17 at 2 and Oct. 18 at 6: "The Wind" (1928, Victor Seastrom; a silent film).... ¶ Oct. 14 at 3 and 6: Three Les Blank films.... ¶ Oct. 15 at 12:30, 3, and 6; Oct. 16 at 5; and Oct. 17 at 2:30: About a hundred British commercials made in 1992.... ¶ Oct. 16 at 2:30 and Oct. 18 at 3: "Kitty Foyle" (†).... ¶ Oct. 17 at 5: "Seventh Heaven" (1927, Frank Borzage).

New York Film Festival—The annual festival of international films—**ALICE TULLY HALL:** Oct. 13 at 6:15: "The War Room" (D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus, United States).... ¶ Oct. 13 at 9:30 and Oct. 16 at noon: "Fiorile" (Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, Italy).... ¶ Oct. 14 at 6:15: "Birthplace" (Pavel Lozinski, Poland).... ¶ Oct. 14 at 8:30: "The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl" (Ray Müller, Germany/United Kingdom)....¶ Oct. 15 at 6:15 and Oct. 16 at 9: "It's All True: Based on an Unfinished Film by Orson Welles" (Richard Wilson, Brazil/France/United States).... ¶ Oct. 15 at 9:15 and Oct. 16 at 3: "Naked" (Mike Leigh, United Kingdom).... ¶ Oct. 16 at 6: "Moving In" (Chantal Akerman, France) and "Calendar" (Atom Egoyan, Canada/Germany/Armenia).... **AVERY FISHER HALL:** Oct. 17 at 8:30: "The Piano" (Jane Campion, Australia/France). (For tickets, call 875-5050.)

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Oct. 13-16: The Film Society's 1993 International Video Arts Festival.... ¶ Oct. 17 at 2 and 6 and Oct. 18 at 2: "Crime and Punishment" (1970, Lev Kulidzhanov; in Russian)....
¶ Oct. 18 at 8:30 and Oct. 19 at 5:45: "Une Femme Douce" (1969, Robert Bresson; in French).... ¶ Oct. 19 at 2 and 7:30: "The Idiot" (1951, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Oct. 16 at 2 and 5: "Apocalypse Now" (1979, Francis Coppola)..... ¶ Oct. 17 at 2: "Nashville" (1975, Robert Altman).... ¶ Oct. 17 at 5: Two episodes of "Tanner '88."

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Oct. 13 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Faces of Women" (1985, Désiré Ecaré; in French).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Oct. 15 at 6 and Oct. 16-17 at 4: Three different programs of new videos from France.... ¶ Oct. 15-16 at 7 and Oct. 17 at 5: Three programs of films by Paul Shartis.... ¶ Oct. 15 at 9, Oct. 16 at 10, and Oct. 17 at 8:30: "Style Wars" (1984, Tony Silver).... ¶ Oct. 16 at 5: "Un Condamné à Mort s'est Échappé" (1956, Robert Bresson; in French, with no English subtitles).... ¶ Oct. 17 at 5: "Pickpocket" (1958, Bresson; in French, with no English subtitles).... ¶ Oct. 18-19 at 7:30 and 9: "The Taste of Iron" (1993, Rémi Bernard; in French) and "Things People Do" (1993, Pascale Bailly; in French).

MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

The Beverly Hillbillies—Based on the television series, with Jim Varney as Jed Clampett, Cloris Leachman as Granny, Erika Eleniak as Elly May, Diedrich Bader as Jethro, Dabney Coleman as Mr. Drysdale, and Lily Tomlin as Miss Hathaway. (Buddy Ebsen appears as Barnaby Jones.) Directed by Penelope Spheeris. Opening October 15.

Farewell My Concubine—A new film by the Chinese director Chen Kaige. In Mandarin. (See brief review on page 37.) Opening October 15.

Fearless—An architect (Jeff Bridges) and a young mother (Rosie Perez) survive a deadly plane crash and struggle to remake their lives. Directed by Peter Weir. Opening October 15.

Inside Monkey Zetterland—A comedy about life in Hollywood, directed by Jefery Levy. (See brief review on page 37.) Opening October 15.

It's All True: Based on an Unfinished Film by Orson Welles—A documentary reconstruction by Richard Wilson of Welles's long-lost 1942 film. A prologue includes interviews with Welles and members of the cast. Advance screenings on October 15-16 at the New York Film Festival. Opening October 17 in limited release.

Judgment Night—Four friends have an adventurous night when they take a wrong turn off the expressway. With Emilio Estevez, Cuba Goodings, Jr., Stephen Dorff, and Jeremy Piven. Directed by Stephen Hopkins. Opening October 15.

Mr. Wonderful—A romantic comedy about a divorcé who tries to find a new husband for his ex-wife. With Matt Dillon, Annabella Sciorra, Mary-Louise Parker, and William Hurt. Directed by Anthony Minghella. Opening October 15.

Rudy—The story of a young man's determination to play football for Notre Dame. With Sean Astin, Ned Beatty, Charles S. Dutton, Jason Miller, and Lili Taylor. Directed by David Anspaugh. Opening October 13.

Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas—An animated fantasy based on a story by Burton. Directed by Henry Selick. Opening October 13.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in "The Current Cinema," the date of its review is given.)

The Age of Innocence—Martin Scorsese returns to form with this hectic adaptation of Edith Wharton's novel. Life in the New York of the eighteen-seventies may have been constrained, but it was never dull—not if Scorsese's camera is anything to go by, leaping from detail to detail like the gaze of an inquisitive gentleman. Everything looks right, from roast duck to waistcoats, but the movie has no ambitions to be a costume museum; it homes in on the passions that had to be veiled by good manners. As the film begins—a showy, overwhelming scene at the opera—we see Newland Archer (Daniel Day-Lewis) about to announce a perfect match with the young May Welland (Winona Ryder). Such perfection is a prison, with no hope of escape, and the vigorous sadness of Day-Lewis tells the whole story; he will never rebel, but in his eyes you see him wishing he could. Less fruitful is the casting of Michelle Pfeiffer as May's older cousin, the mysterious Countess Olenska, with whom Archer falls hopelessly in love. With her silly blond curls, Pfeiffer looks more plaintive than the dark exotic of Wharton's imagination.—A.L. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/13/93.) (Village Theatre VII, Coronet, Orpheum VII, and Ziegfeld.)

A Bronx Tale—"It was 1960, and doo-wop was the sound on the streets." The opening voice-over establishes the point of view of Robert De Niro's début as a director: an excitable nostalgia, which turns thugs into demigods and workingmen into heroes. The plot turns on the tussle for a boy's soul: De Niro plays Lorenzo, whose son Calogero is spending too much time with a local hood named Sonny (Chazz Palminteri) and his band of merry men—Tony Toupee, Eddie Mush, and so forth. Everyone here is a bit of a character, an O.K. guy; the whole movie is built from this well-meaning shorthand, with an oldies soundtrack to boost the mood. The tale was originally written by Palminteri as a five-minute monologue, then grew into a full stage performance before becoming a screenplay; by now it feels tired, and you can't help feeling that the material has already been worked to death onscreen. On the plus side are Sonny's reverse-driving skills, and a silky, striking performance by Lillo Brancato as the teen-age Calogero.—A.L. (Village Theatre VII, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Cool Runnings—The filmmakers take the adventure of the 1988 Jamaican Olympic bobsled team and turn it into a kiddie movie—almost a toddler movie. Except for a few piquant sports details, they fictionalize everything and play it for easy laughs and melodrama; they even sink to portraying East German bobsledders as racist villains. Leon, Doug E. Doug, Rawle D. Lewis, and Malik Yoba are the teammates; John Candy is their disreputable American coach. Jon Turteltaub directed the script by Lynn Siefert, Tommy Swerdlow, and Michael Goldberg.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Olympia, and Embassy.)

Dazed and Confused—A relaxed, uplifting new movie from Richard Linklater, who directed "Slacker." It's the last day of school, summer 1976, and a bunch of seniors are pondering their futures and getting ready to thrash their juniors. We learn of Pink (Jason London), for instance, who wants to play football and smoke pot. But the movie has no particular hero or heroine; Linklater is too democratic for that, and his camera glides around offering moments of heroism, or bliss, to all the characters in turn. There isn't much plot, but what there is gets resolved at an all-night party; you keep expecting the film to move on, but it just hangs around and enjoys itself. This is a great time-capsule film—Alice Cooper and Thin Lizzy on the soundtrack, womb-shaped plastic chairs, and the flap of flared jeans—but it's far more than that. With his endless gags and crisp, glowing images, Linklater has come up with a dramatization of good will.—A.L. (10/4/93) (Village Theatre VII, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

Farewell My Concubine—Chen Kaige's film is a big, eventful historical soap opera of the "Doctor Zhivago" school—the sort of drama that uses the unsettled emotional lives of a handful of characters to portray the human cost of war and of constant political upheaval. The movie follows a pair of male Beijing Opera performers, Cheng Dieyi (Leslie Cheung) and Duan Xiaolou (Zhang Fengyi), from their school days, in the nineteen-twenties and early thirties, to their farewell performance together, in 1977. Duan (who plays warriors and kings) and Cheng (who plays the important female roles) have an ideal relationship onstage, but offstage they often seem less like mythic lovers than like miserable, muddling-through partners in an arranged marriage. Chen keeps the action charging forward breathlessly, for more than two and a half hours, and at a certain point you begin to realize that the obvious theatre-versus-life ironies are only a small part of what the movie is about. The real subject is whether it's possible, in times that demand perpetual revolutions in values, to remain true to anyone or anything: an art, an ideal, a friend, a wife, oneself. Also with Gong Li. Screenplay by Lilian Lee and Lu Wei. Co-winner of the Golden Palm at the 1993 Cannes Film Festival. In Mandarin.—T.R. (10/11/93) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; starting Oct. 15.)

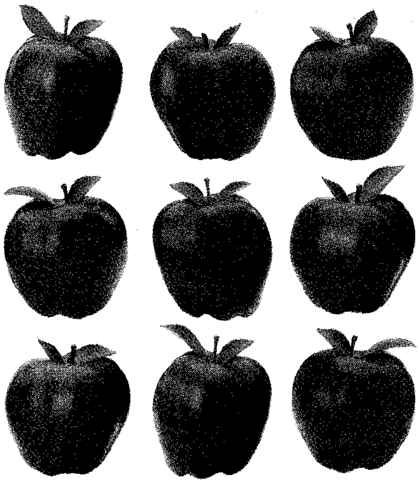
For Love or Money—In this alternately mushy and cynical Manhattan fairy tale, Michael J. Fox plays a superb concierge plotting to found his own luxury hotel with the help of a slick investor (Anthony Higgins), who's having an affair with Fox's dream girl (Gabrielle Anwar). For roughly the first half hour, Fox wheels and deals irresistibly; then the character becomes a self-pitying toady, and the movie suffers a blowout. Gimmick-prone Barry Sonnenfeld ("The Addams Family") directed the script by Mark Rosenthal and Lawrence Konner.—M.S. (59th Street East Cinema, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway. . . . ¶ 34th St. East, and National Twin; through Oct. 14.)

The Good Son—Having Macaulay Culkin play the bad seed in a cozy Maine household is a promisingly nasty joke—after all, a serial killer is only a tad more vicious than the sentimental sadist of the "Home Alone" movies. With Culkin victimizing a bereaved cousin (Elijah Wood) who believes that his dead mother's soul has entered the body of his aunt (Wendy Crewson), the potential for psychodramedy is immense. But Ian McEwan's script skimps on development and complication, never mind plausibility. Joseph Ruben directed, skillfully but far too solemnly—there's a fatal drop in irony from Ruben's "The Stepfather" to "Sleeping with the Enemy" and this film.—M.S. (Gotham Cinema, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Park & 86th Street Cinemas; through Oct. 14.)

Inside Monkey Zetterland—The biggest joke in this lame L.A. story is the title. There *is* no "inside" to twentysomething Monkey Zetterland (Steven Antin), a former actor and would-be writer. He's a child of Hollywood (Mom is a soap star); even his paranoid fits are figments of pop culture. This might be a fruitful subject for black comedy, but Antin, who also wrote the script, falls into a sickly slapstick poignance. Monkey yearns for "meaning"; Antin and the director, Jefery Levy, have none to deliver—only a circus parade of bizarre kith and kin. With Katherine Helmond, Patricia Arquette, Sandra Bernhard, Martha Plimpton, Rupert Everett, and Sofia Coppola.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas; starting Oct. 15.)

Into the West—The adventures of two Irish boys, Ossie (Ciaran Fitzgerald) and Tito (Ruaidhri Conroy), and a white horse, which transports them from a depressing Dublin housing project all the way to the island's wild western shore. The screenplay, by Jim Sheridan, is based on motifs from Celtic mythology: Ossie's name refers to the legendary poet-warrior Ossian; the horse's name is Tir na nOg, which means Land of Eternal Youth (the Celtic version of Paradise); and in the old tales the waves of the Atlantic, where this movie reaches its climax, were sometimes called "white horses." This sort of marriage of ancient myths and contemporary realities rarely works, but Sheridan and the director, Mike Newell, keep the story moving along nimbly and achieve a winning blend of comedy and lyricism. The filmmakers don't have to insist on the magical properties of their story, because the horse—which evokes memories of the wondrous creature in Albert Lamorisse's great 1953 children's film, "White Mane"—supplies all the magic the movie needs. Also with Gabriel Byrne, Ellen Barkin, David Kelly, and Colm Meaney. The lovely cinematography is by Tom Sigel.—T.R. (Quad Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Jamón Jamón—The setting is rural Spain, the director is Bigas Luna, and the plot feels like Sigmund Freud rewritten by Julia Child. José (Jordi Molla) falls for Silvia (Penelope Cruz) on the grounds of taste—various parts



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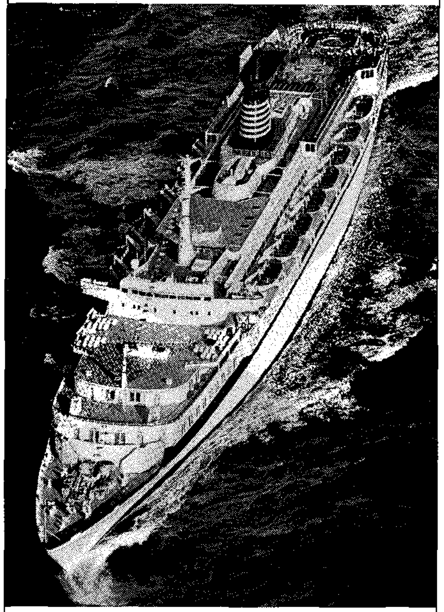

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of her anatomy remind him of ham and tortillas. His suspiciously adoring mother, Conchita (Stefania Sandrelli), disapproves of this nutritious romance, and hires a stud named Raul (Javier Bardem) to steal Silvia away from her son. Unfortunately, Luna's excess is too contrived, and too scrappily staged, to be truly shocking. You have to admire his nerve for dogging the footsteps of Pedro Almodóvar, but he lacks his compatriot's sense of balance, and his execution never matches the lurid invention. Sandrelli, however, gives a typically ripe and delicious performance, and there is one scene—a naked bullfight after dark—of startling menace and hilarity. In Spanish.—A.L. (Paris.)

THE JOY LUCK CLUB—Amy Tan's 1989 novel is actually a collection of sixteen linked short stories about Chinese immigrant mothers trying to impart their knowledge of life to their Americanized daughters. Unfortunately, Tan and Ronald Bass ("Rain Man"), who wrote the movie, have attempted to cram all her mini-narratives into the script, diminishing instead of enlarging them. The contemporary scenes of marital discord and generational strife seem pat or trite, while the flashbacks to the mothers' woeful lives in China seem overblown or empty and portentous. Wayne Wang's limp direction is only part of the problem. Tan and Bass rely so heavily on voice-over narration that it sponges up the possibilities for genuine drama and emotion. By the end, the filmmakers just about beg for tears.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Cinema II, 86th Street East Twin, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

MALICE—With Alec Baldwin, Nicole Kidman, and Bill Pullman; directed by Harold Becker. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

M. BUTTERFLY—David Cronenberg's movie version of the acclaimed play by David Henry Hwang strips the work of its Brechtian theatricality and its heavily sarcastic (and politically correct) one-liners, but what's left after all this prudent streamlining still doesn't add up to much. The main characters are René Gallimard (Jeremy Irons), a French diplomat posted to China, and Song Liling (John Lone), a Beijing Opera actor who impersonates a woman in real life as well as on the stage; in a nearly twenty-year affair with Song, Gallimard never figures out that his lover is a man. For Hwang, this absurd romance is more than a hilarious illustration of the axiom that love is blind (or, in this case, utterly insensate); it's emblematic of imperialistic Western attitudes toward the East and of men's desire for submissive women. Cronenberg's dispirited treatment of the material has the effect of exposing it, inadvertently, for what it really is: not a pure, incandescent work of art but an extremely ordinary piece of agitprop drama. Also with Barbara Sukowa and Ian Richardson.—T.R. (10/11/93) (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

THE PROGRAM—Despite its soapy subplots, this year-in-the-life of a college football program boasts exciting, uproarious physical and verbal hyperbole. It captures the desperation, danger, and nutty adrenalized euphoria of boys stretching themselves into literal and figurative giants. The writer-director, David S. Ward, and his co-writer, Aaron Latham, don't create distinctive characters; the team leader is a hard-drinking, risk-addicted quarterback (Craig Sheffer) who, predictably, yearns to connect with his alcoholic old man. But James Caan does get to play some bleakly comic scenes as a backed-to-the-wall coach, and there are several electric young performers (including Omar Epps and Duane Davis).—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; through Oct. 14. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting Oct. 15.)

SHORT CUTS—In this wildly ambitious picture, Robert Altman uses nine short stories by Raymond Carver as the raw material for a latter-day "Nashville," set in Southern California. (One story line—by far the weakest—is the invention of Altman and his co-screenwriter, Frank Barhydt.) Most of the stories in the three-hour-and-seven-minute movie are about misunderstandings—often outright hostilities—between men and women, and the juxtaposition of all these poisonous domestic relationships has the effect of turning Carver's closely observed, scrupulously specific small dramas into a big, obvious generalization about men's brutality and women's capacity for endurance. Despite Altman's exquisite control of pace, the movie seems thin and insubstantial, and every moment feels pretty much like every other. The filmmaker hovers above his characters, spraying them with significance, and rarely touches down; he has to work too hard to maintain his overview, and, finally, the correspondences he wants us to see from up there start to look contrived, illusory. Of the twenty-two principal actors, a handful do terrific work here: Jack Lemmon, Bruce Davison, Julianne Moore, Lily Tomlin, Jennifer Jason Leigh, and Madeleine Stowe.—T.R. (9/27/93) (Cinema I, and Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

THE WEDDING BANQUET—Except for the title celebration itself—a ritualized mob scene that gets weirder and funnier as it goes on—this cross-cultural, cross-sexual comedy-drama, set in New York City, is just a wan getting-to-know-you fable for alternative families. Ang Lee's film centers on the marital subterfuge of a successful gay Taiwanese immigrant (Winston Chao): despite having a long-time companion (Mitchell Lichtenstein), he weds a struggling artist (May Chin) from mainland China to satisfy his traditional parents, who come from Taiwan for an extended visit as soon as they learn he's engaged. Chao and Lichtenstein are likable, but Chin, as the confused, desirous bride, and Sihung Lung and Ah-Leh Gua, as the dignified, well-meaning father and mother, are the ones who deserve cheers.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center, and Cinema 3. . . . ¶ Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; through Oct. 14.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Anthony Lane.)

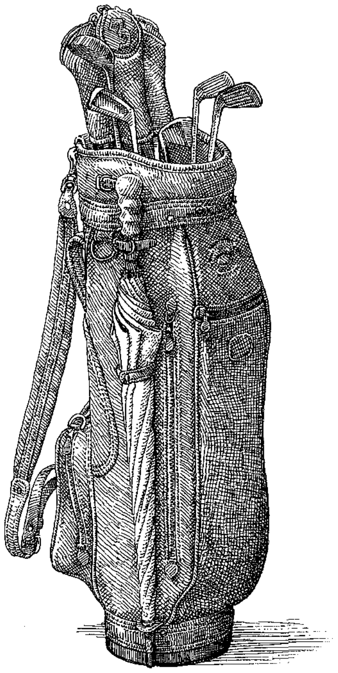
The Asphalt Jungle (1950)—A competent (often overrated) thriller by John Huston about a group of crooks who plan a jewel robbery and how their characters determine the results. Sterling Hayden is the central figure; the cast includes Sam Jaffe, Louis Calhern, Jean Hagen, Marilyn Monroe, James Whitmore, John McIntire, and Marc Lawrence. The screenplay, by Ben Maddow and Huston, was adapted from the W. R. Burnett novel.—P.K. (Thalia; through Oct. 14.)

Kitty Foyle (1940)—Ginger Rogers won the Academy Award for Best Actress for her "serious" performance as a white-collar girl whose baby dies. In a long career of giving pleasure, this is one of the few occasions when she failed; it isn't her worst acting (that's probably in "Tender Comrade") but there's nothing in this soggy material to release the distinctive Ginger Rogers sense of fun. Dalton Trumbo and Donald Ogden Stewart adapted Christopher Morley's novel; Sam Wood directed. With Dennis Morgan, James Craig, Gladys Cooper, Florence Bates, Eduardo Ciannelli, Cecil Cunningham, and Nella Walker.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 16 and 18.)

Orphans of the Storm (1921)—It's almost unbelievable, but this D. W. Griffith spectacle set during the French Revolution was not a financial success. It's a marvellous, expensively produced mixture of melodrama and sentimentality, with duels, kidnappings, the storming of the Bastille, and Lillian Gish being saved from the guillotine. It's not one of Griffith's greatest; in a way, it seems dated, even for a 1921 movie. (Not in its technique—in its thinking.) But those who saw it as children never forgot the sequence in which Lillian hears the voice of her long-lost blind sister, played by Dorothy Gish. Griffith sequences like this go beyond heart-wringing into some arena of theatrical sublimity. The huge cast includes the handsome young Joseph Schildkraut, Monte Blue as Danton, and Louis Wolheim as the executioner. Cinematography by Hendrik Sartov, Billy Bitzer, and Paul Allen. (It's a big picture—fourteen reels when it opened, cut to twelve reels a few months later.)—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 14 and 19.)

Story of a Cheat (1936)—Sacha Guitry was one of those outsize personalities (Maurice Chevalier and Michel Simon also come to mind) who ballooned into French cinema and gave it a fresh bounce. He came from the stage and made no bones about his love of theatricality, but he also saw that movies could offer him new tricks. He was never more lively than in "Story of a Cheat," the feathery tale of an orphaned cad who finds Heaven at the gaming tables. Guitry was the star, writer, director, and presiding deity, and one has to admit that a little goes a long way; he narrates almost the whole story himself, which leaves you pining for other voices. But this is a rare chance to see a great dilettante in full flow. In French.—A.L. (Little Theatre.)

Toys in the Attic (1963)—This Freudian Southern gothic is well done for what it is—one of those hyped-up unflinching movies in which a family that is "living a lie" suddenly finds its glass house crashing down. ("You never really loved me. . . . It was Jed, your own father, you really wanted. . . . Go on, say it.") The main characters in James Poe's adaptation of Lillian Hellman's play are an incestuous trio of two sisters (Geraldine Page and Wendy Hiller) and a dependent, weakling brother (Dean Martin, pitiably miscast). Page shows considerable brio, as she makes her transitions from fluttering Dixie charm to granitic cruelty; Hiller has the trembling-lip role. There's no shortage of dramaturgy, such as a crucial overheard conversation. And Martin has to perceive the psychological truth of Page's attachment to him, and walk out a man. Whatever made anyone think there'd be an audience for this? George Roy Hill directed. With Yvette Mimieux and Gene Tierney.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 13.)



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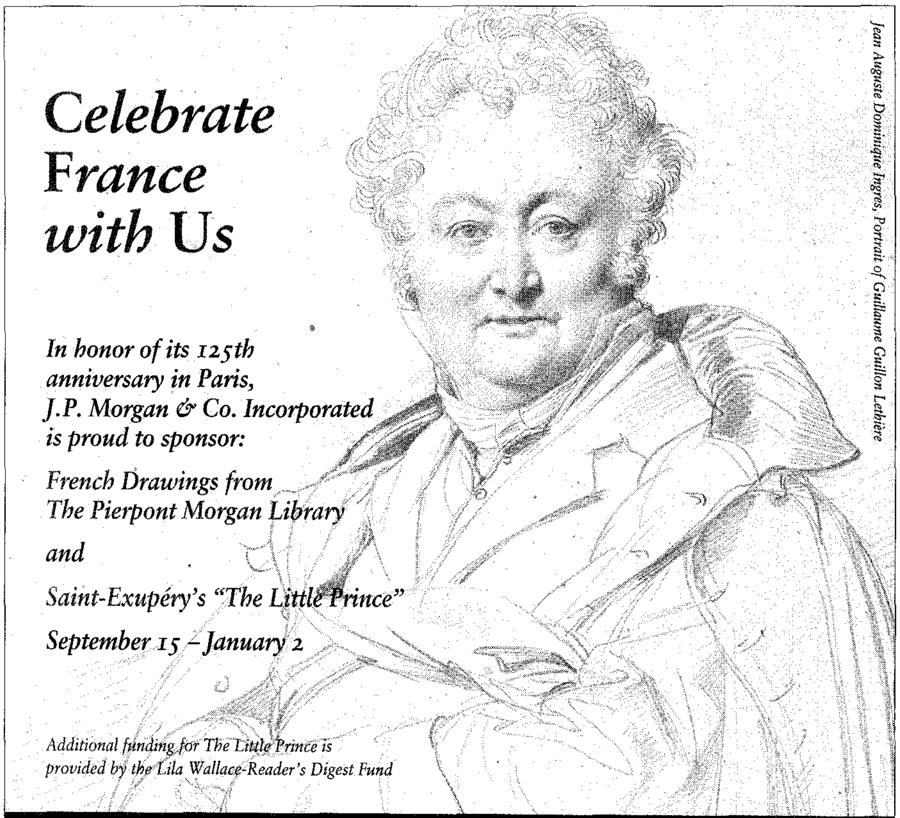

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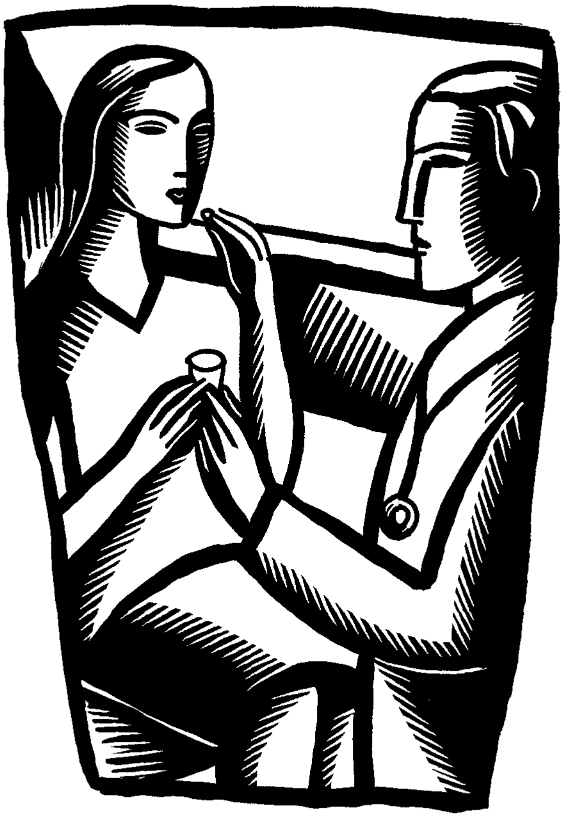
THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

THE NEXT ABORTION BATTLE

"COME and join the effort to save God's precious infants, in the most abortion entrenched city in the world," reads a full-page ad in a recent issue of *Life Advocate*. The city being referred to is New York. The magazine is a publication of Advocates for Life Ministries, an Oregon-based organization that emerged earlier this year as one of the more militant forces in the anti-abortion movement. (*Life Advocate* has published several articles defending the idea of killing doctors who perform abortions.) The ad was bought by New York-area anti-abortion activists formerly affiliated with Operation Rescue, in the hope that it would attract thousands of protesters to the city this month to block the entrances to local abortion clinics.

While anti-abortion demonstrators have been preparing to gather in front of a number of clinics in the city, Larry Lader—who got involved in the abortion-rights movement soon after his book, "Abortion," was published in 1966, and is now the president of a small Manhattan-based group, Abortion Rights Mobilization—has been working to bring about what he believes will be the next crucial phase in the abortion battle. That struggle, he told a visitor the other day, will be about the availability in the United States of RU 486, a drug that has several potential applications, including cancer treatment, but is more commonly known as the abortion pill. (Abortion Rights Mobilization made front-page news in July of last year when it recruited Leona Benten, a pregnant social worker from California, to bring RU 486 into the United States from abroad to challenge the United States Food and Drug Administration's ban on importing the drug for personal use. The pills were seized at Kennedy Airport, and the ban remains in effect.) Lader—seventy-four years old, lean-framed, avuncular—was quietly expressing his views from a green-and-white armchair in the sunny living room of his Fifth Avenue apartment. The substance of the abortion debate to come was, in a sense, in his kitchen.



Lader often works out of his apartment, and in his refrigerator there he keeps a plastic jar that is two-thirds full of white powder. Abortion Rights Mobilization has made a bootleg batch of RU 486, and the jar in Lader's fridge holds part of the group's stash of the drug. RU 486 is officially manufactured in France by the pharmaceutical company Roussel Uclaf, but it is unavailable in the United States in large part because Roussel and its German parent, Hoechst AG, have steadfastly refused to distribute it here for fear that anti-abortion activists would organize a boycott of the companies' products on the American market, sales of which last year totalled in the billions of dollars.

Abortion-rights advocates like Lader believe that when RU 486 becomes available here it will help bring about a technological endgame to a long political struggle. RU 486 is an anti-progestin, which blocks the hormone progesterone from making the uterus hospitable to an embryo. A dosage of the drug taken in the first few weeks of pregnancy, followed two days later by a dosage in pill form of the hormonelike substance prostaglandin—a two-step procedure that any doctor is capable of overseeing—results in uterine contractions and the expulsion of the embryo. "This can be done in the privacy of a doctor's office, and they can't picket every doctor in the country," Lader said.

He recalled that members of Abortion Rights Mobilization first discussed the possibility of producing copies of RU 486 for testing purposes about three years ago. The group never gave any serious thought to actually manufacturing or distrib-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANTHONY RUSSO

uting the drug itself, he said. Asked why, he provided several reasons: the drug is still unapproved by the F.D.A., the sale of a bootleg version would likely be an infringement of Roussel's patent, and commercial activity by Abortion Rights Mobilization would be inconsistent with its status as a tax-exempt, not-for-profit organization. Through its efforts to make an abortion pill for testing, however, the group is seeking to goad Hoechst and Roussel into licensing RU 486 to another firm for manufacture and distribution in the States. (Such a licensing agreement is under discussion between Roussel and the Population Council, a New York-based research group.)

Lader went on to explain that his group's legal strategy involves using an obscure New York State statute as an alternative to F.D.A. regulations governing the testing of a new drug. This statute provides for state approval, for testing purposes only, of certain new drugs. (A number of states have similar statutes and groups impatient with the F.D.A. have sought to use them to speed the availability of alternative treatments for cancer and AIDS.) As Lader understands it, the New York statute gives the state the authority to approve a drug for testing as long as it is manufactured within the state's boundaries and is tested only within the state. (A spokesman for the F.D.A., on being asked, said that the agency was not enthusiastic about the idea of states' taking drug-approval matters into their own hands.)

The bootleg RU 486 that Lader has in his refrigerator was manufactured at a small laboratory in Westchester that Abortion Rights Mobilization rented for eleven months beginning in May of 1992. Actual production of active ingredients needed for an RU 486 copy did not get under way until last fall. "We had to put the lab together," Lader said. "We had to put in a huge exhaust system, because the fumes had to go up through the roof. The details became horrendous—getting the permits for that exhaust system, going through the local authorities. Well, I'm trying not to sound too deceitful here, but, obviously, we had to fudge what we were really doing. We had to talk about cancer. We couldn't say RU 486."

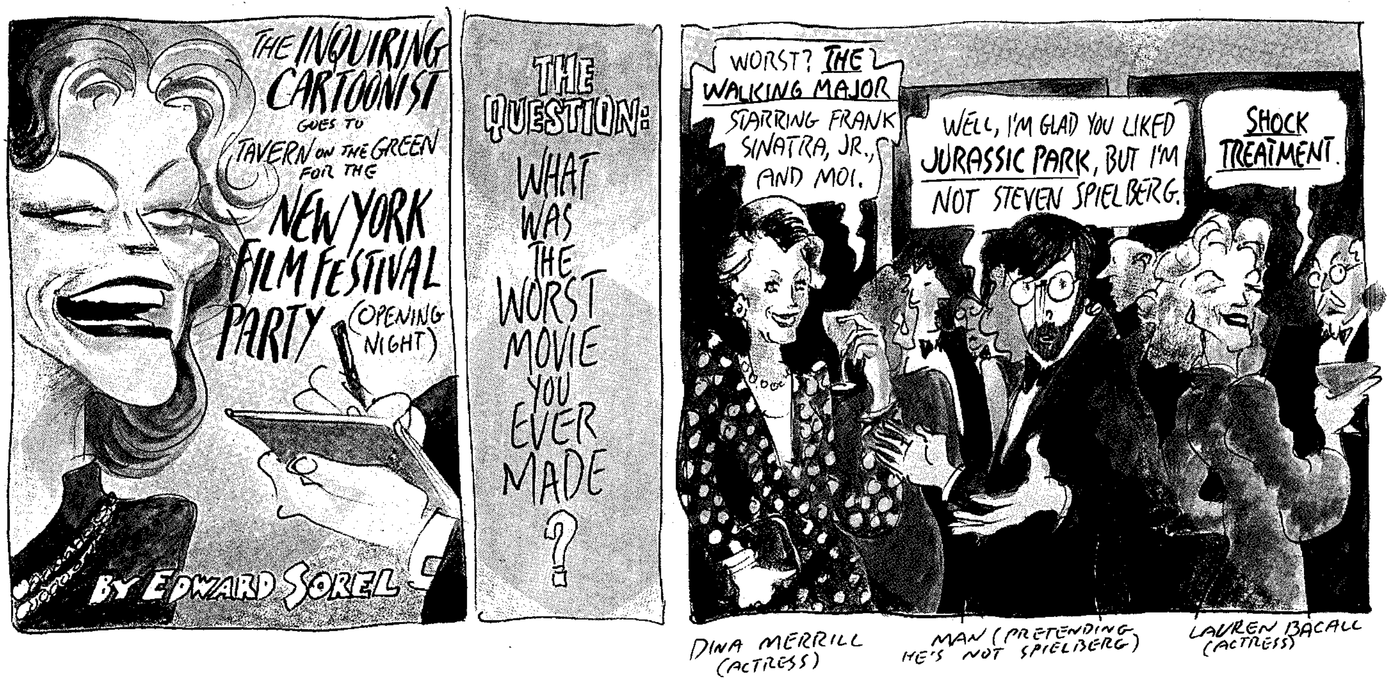
Finding scientists who had the requisite background and were willing to participate in the project proved even harder, Lader said. He enlisted David Horne, a Columbia University chemistry professor who is an expert in the synthesis of drugs from organic compounds, to supervise the project and persuaded a scientist from another state—he would not identify him—to perform the day-to-day work with the help of an assistant. By spring, the team had identified all the ingredients used by Roussel in RU 486, and had manufactured enough of each ingredient for ninety doses of their own version.

Two months ago, Abortion Rights Mobilization applied to state officials for permission to begin testing the safety and efficacy of their abortion pill. Lader says that if RU 486 remains unavailable in this country, if Abortion Rights Mobilization wins state approval to test its version, and if its version passes those tests, the group will approach Hoechst and Roussel to request that they license the drug to a firm that would make it available here. In the hope that Hoechst and Roussel may eventually agree to do so, Lader is already talking with a potential American manufacturer.

The distribution of RU 486 in the United States may change the abortion debate, as Lader predicts, but will probably do little to lessen its intensity. Reached by phone and asked about RU 486, Randall Terry, the founder of Operation Rescue, said, "We would make life a living hell for any pharmacy manufacturer that produced this human pesticide."

THE DEVIL IS IN THE NUMBERS. . . .

"I'M returning your call about the Heavenbound"—that was the message left on our answering machine last week by one Martin King, a spokesman for the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board, in Atlanta. Right away, Mr. King seemed like a real glass-half-full kind of guy. Because when we'd called him and left a message it was to ask him how many of the nearly 1.5 million souls in Manhattan were, according to his calculations, going to, ah, you know where.


THE INQUIRING CARTOONIST
GOES TO
TAVERN ON THE GREEN
FOR THE
NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL PARTY
(OPENING NIGHT)
BY EDWARD SOREL
THE QUESTION:
WHAT WAS THE WORST MOVIE YOU EVER MADE?
WORST? THE WALKING MAJOR STARRING FRANK SINATRA, JR., AND MOI.
WELL, I'M GLAD YOU LIKED JURASSIC PARK, BUT I'M NOT STEVEN SPIELBERG.
SHOCK TREATMENT.
DINA MERRILL (ACTRESS)
MAN (PRETENDING HE'S NOT SPIELBERG)
LAUREN BACALL (ACTRESS)

And that didn't seem like such an outlandish question to ask Mr. King; after all, the Southern Baptists, using a so-called secret formula, had worked up such a figure for Manhattan (i.e., New York County), and also for every other county in these United States. We learned about this from an Associated Press story about the controversy caused last month when the Birmingham *News* somehow got hold of the Southern Baptists' county-by-county breakdown for Alabama and printed a front-page story, headlined "BAPTISTS COUNT THE LOST." The paper reported that a full one million eight hundred and sixty thousand Alabamians were said to be headed straight for—well, the bad (and, we guess, big) place.

When we finally got to talk with Mr. King, he told us that the Baptist researchers in Atlanta had indeed applied a secret formula to all the various denominations and faiths represented in Manhattan and had come up with some numbers.

"Any way you could give us the numbers?" we asked.

"No," Mr. King said, and he sounded as if he meant it. "We can't really defend the numbers, but we shouldn't really have to, because it's only for us. It's an internal planning document, and if you don't believe about salvation the same way we do, then, *so what*? I mean, we're not making any charges against people—we're just trying to find out where folks are who need our product. You know, if I said, 'Well, New York County showed up to be seventy-three per cent lost,' it just wouldn't have any utility for anybody except as we'd look at maybe putting more resources into New York State—or should we put it into Southern California? Or how much effort should we put into the Plains states, because there are a lot of people there that appear to be lost, but they're real spread out."

Being stubborn, we again asked Mr. King for the actual secret formula—you know, the one for estimating how many folks here will be going *down there*. "The secret formula," Mr. King said, "is *secret*."

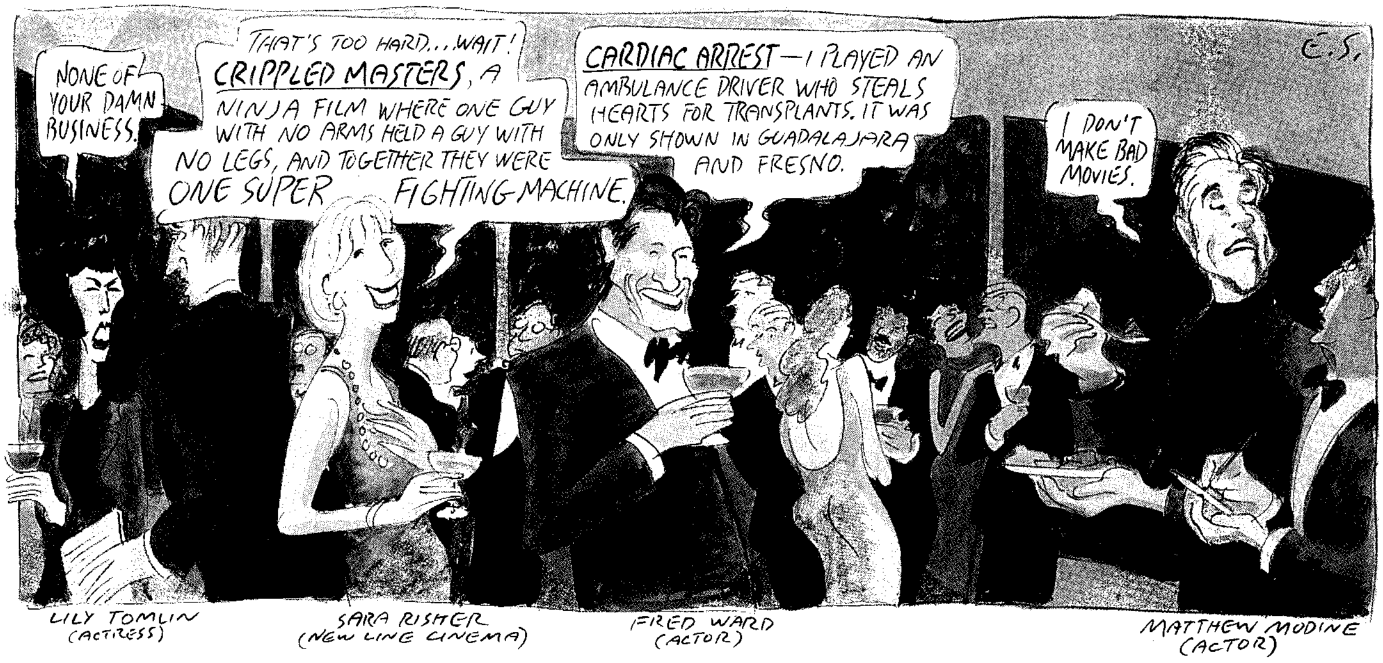
Well, then, the hell with it.

GOD, HOWEVER, REMAINS IN THE DETAILS

A NUN'S ivory linen wimple is a religion thing. It is not a fashion thing. A fashion thing would be a silk-mousseline camisole with matching drop-waist flare pants. A silk chasuble is a religion thing. A gabardine micro-mini is a fashion thing. Tube top? Fashion thing. Tunicle? Religion. O.K. A matte-gold-toned cookie-dough-textured four-by-six-inch cross on a long black velvet strap? Sounds like a religion thing, but it's a fashion thing. In fact, a huge fashion thing. Not everybody knows this. Some people stop at the Cross Culture boutique on Macy's main floor looking for a religion thing, but what they'll find is a fashion thing, such as a silver-filigree Maltese cross on a thirty-inch string of jet beads, and also a Celtic cross made of cobalt, crystal, and rhinestone on a simulated-pearl chain, and a fist-size gold one covered with gold hobnails, and one with a cameo in the center surrounded by purple, green, blue, and pink semiprecious stones, and one with an extra-long antiqued-silver chain so it can be slung shoulder-to-hip, bandolier style, which, by the way, happens to look great with a crushed-velvet cat suit and little biker boots: definitely fashion things.

Toni Borowski, who is a sales associate at Macy's cross boutique, helped sort out religion things and fashion things one recent afternoon. "If what someone wants is small and gold, a crucifix-type cross, we send them to the fourteen-karat counter," Toni said. "We explain to them that crosses like these here are a fashion statement. This counter used to have silk scarves and evening bags. That's gone. Now we're doing trend-type crosses here. If they want a religion-statement type, it's two counters down."

A spindly woman wearing a black tunic and black Reeboks, who was browsing at the counter, turned and said, "I've


E.S.
NONE OF YOUR DAMN BUSINESS.
THAT'S TOO HARD... WAIT! CRIPPLED MASTERS, A NINJA FILM WHERE ONE GUY WITH NO ARMS HELD A GUY WITH NO LEGS, AND TOGETHER THEY WERE ONE SUPER FIGHTING-MACHINE.
CARDIAC ARREST—I PLAYED AN AMBULANCE DRIVER WHO STEALS HEARTS FOR TRANSPLANTS. IT WAS ONLY SHOWN IN GUADALAJARA AND FRESNO.
I DON'T MAKE BAD MOVIES.
LILY TOMLIN (ACTRESS)
SARA RISHER (NEW LINE CINEMA)
FRED WARD (ACTOR)
MATTHEW MODINE (ACTOR)

been buying crosses for *years*, and, as a matter of fact, I'm an atheist."

"Like I said, these aren't religion," Toni went on. "Occasionally, people stop and say 'Where are the Stars of David? What about equal time?' and I say I understand but also, hey, that's not the fashion. Some people tell me they think this is sacrilegious, but I just politely send them to fourteen-karat. Frankly, I think if the Pope himself had come and blessed these there would still be someone who would complain."

The woman in the tunic asked to see a long, pointy silver cross inlaid with hematite. She held it close to her nose for a moment and then set it on the counter. "I don't have on my I-can't-*see*-you glasses, but I think this looks too Presbyterian for me. Can I see the one with the stained-glass chunks? Ooh, this is gorgeous. Damn, I wish I'd had this yesterday. It's very Coptic. It would have been great with my dress."

Toni said, "We have one of the best selections in New York City, but, honestly, I'm a little low on crosses right now. They're flying out the door."

A teen-ager wearing tight bluejeans and a short black vinyl jacket stopped at the counter and asked to see an antiqued-silver cross on a long string of almond-shaped beads. "I'm not a Madonna maniac," she said to Toni. "My feeling is, moderation is the key to, like, anything. I have a great, like, Roman-style jacket that I need this for."

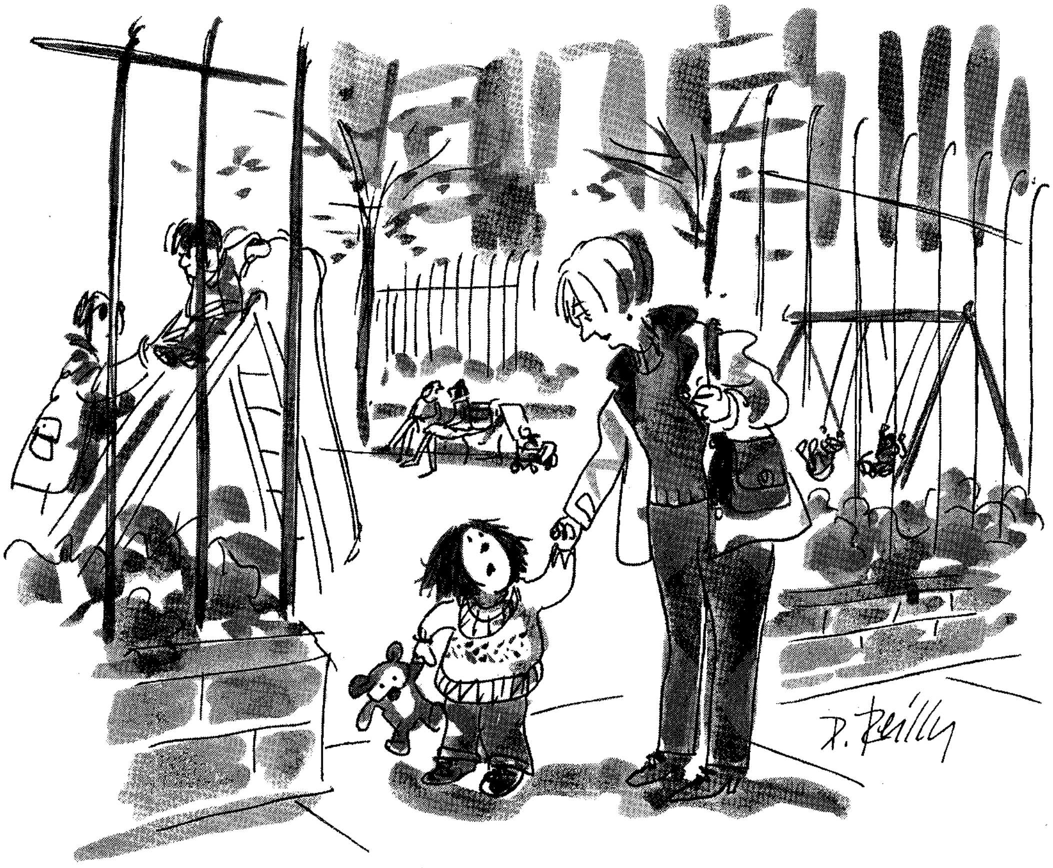
"I know what you mean," Toni said, nodding. "I only own one cross personally. As a look, I don't absolutely think it's me. Also, I think the big, giant ones are a little hard to wear as a business look. I happen to love the other two things we're doing at this counter—the long beads and the chokers. The beads are a kind of romantic thing that started maybe last year. The chokers suddenly got big in February, for some reason."

"Brenda and Kelly," the woman in the tunic said. "The girls on 'Beverly Hills, 90210.' They started wearing chokers in February."

"Oh God, *Brenda*," the teen-ager said. "Pul-lease."

"Do you have anything else real, real exotic?" the woman asked Toni. "I live in Orlando, just fifteen minutes from Mickey, but we don't have a great cross selection around there."

Toni tapped the counter for a minute and then pulled out a lumpy Gothic-style cross with stones sprinkled across it.



"Let's go crosstown. This playground has too many other Samanthas."

"Reminds me of the Crusades," the woman said admiringly. "I'll take it."

JACK HANDEY, REAL DEEP

"IF trees could scream, would we be so cavalier about cutting them down?" asks Jack Handey. His own answer to the question: "We might, if they screamed all the time, for no good reason." Jack Handey is not a real person. He is a fictional character created by a forty-four-year-old New York writer whose name, coincidentally, is Jack Handey. The real Jack Handey does most of his writing while lying in bed and bouncing a lacrosse ball against the ceiling, letting his thoughts drift. The pretend Jack Handey, according to his creator, "is sort of an earnest idiot."

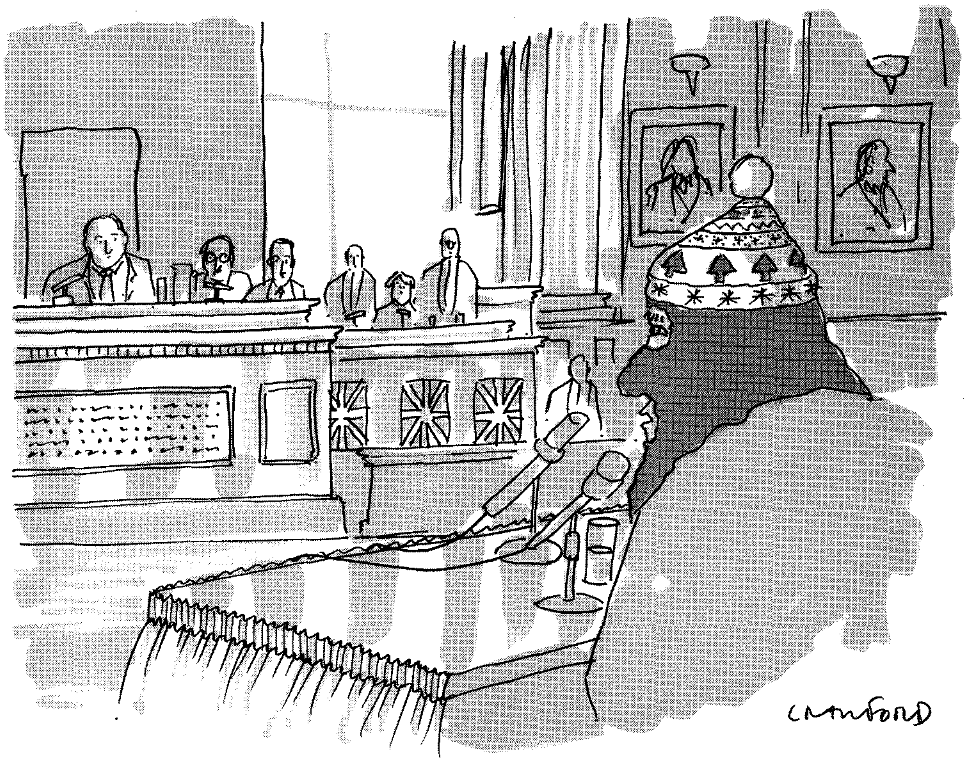
For a number of years, the aphorisms of the pretend Jack Handey have been featured—under the rubric "Deep Thoughts, by Jack Handey"—on "Saturday Night Live," the show for which the real Jack Handey was until this year a writer. During his seven years on "S.N.L.," he wrote hundreds of sketches of all sorts, among them "Unfrozen Cave Man Lawyer," "Deer Heads," and half a dozen installments of "Toonces," which featured a cat who knew how to drive a car, though not very well. But it is for "Deep Thoughts" that he is best known, if only indirectly. The other day, we heard, to our horror, that Handey (the real) would not be writing for the show this season. Deeply troubled, we decided to go and see him.

"People always assume that the name Jack Handey is made up," he said, shortly after we arrived. "They say, 'The name is perfect! How did you guys come up with it?' I realize now that I have a joke name." Handey looks a little bit like the young Rudy Vallee. He has curly reddish hair, wears wire-rimmed glasses, and smiles in an engaging way that makes you think he probably has a fine singing voice. His eyes are green. He lives in an apartment in Chelsea, with his wife, Marta, who acts as his editor. The Handeys have no children, and they keep peculiar hours. They typically rise in the early afternoon and stay up until three or four in the morning. (“We live like drug addicts, but without drugs,” Marta says.) They have two cats—one of which is the real Toonces—and the ashes of a third. They keep the ashes in a colorful tin on a shelf in their living room.

Handey explained that he had decided to leave “Saturday Night Live” in order to concentrate on non-televised forms of writing, including the setting down of more deep thoughts. He has already published two books. The first is called “Deep Thoughts,” and the second is called “Deeper Thoughts.” Both have been very popular, and there are now greeting cards and calendars based on them. “There’s also a blow-up, rock-’em–sock-’em Jack Handey doll,” Handey said. “Wait, no, there’s not.” To our relief, he also told us that “Deep Thoughts, by Jack Handey,” written by Jack Handey, will continue to be featured on “S.N.L.”

Handey was born in Texas, the son of a Marine Corps officer, and was reared all over the country. After college, at the University of Texas at El Paso, he worked for a number of newspapers in the Southwest. During a period when he was writing a column for the Santa Fe *New Mexican*, he lived in an adobe duplex whose other half was occupied by Steve Martin. “Steve was not famous then,” Handey recalled. “He would come over to my apartment and play his banjo, and stuff. A couple of years later, I saw him on the ‘Tonight Show’ and said, ‘Hey, my neighbor!’ I sent him a bunch of my columns, and he hired me to write for him. That was my proverbial lucky break.” Martin later helped him get a job at “Saturday Night Live.”

In a closet in the Handeys’ bedroom are boxes containing thousands of deep thoughts, most of which have never been seen by anyone but the Handeys. Some of them may appear in a book called “Deep Thoughtitos,” Handey revealed to us; it would contain “very short deep thoughts for those times when you feel that you can’t handle a whole one.” Another possible future project is a collection of short stories by the pretend Jack Handey, tentatively titled “Untrue Stories of Fiction.” Like “Deep Thoughts,” “Untrue Stories” would embody the point of view of a guy who thinks of himself as a sensitive person but basically doesn’t get it—“a guy,” in the words of the real Jack Handey, “who is on the verge of insanity but thinks, We’re all like this, aren’t we?”

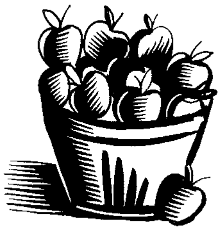


“I’d prefer to wear the mask, Commissioner, but I will slip out of these boots and skis, if you have no objection.”

• •

The pretend Jack Handey has this advice for people who are just like him: “If you ever fall off the Sears Tower, just go real limp, because maybe you’ll look like a dummy and people will try to catch you because, hey, free dummy.”

THE CRACK OF AUTUMN



New York’s greenmarkets have begun their major autumn task: changing the capital-“A” Apple, Eve’s temptation and the supermarket’s year-round shame, to a dozen or more small-“a” apples, each specific to its own time and taste. City children no longer need settle for the so-called Delicious, which was developed by pomologists seeking an apple with a supernatural ability to keep and with what some apple growers call “typey” shape—the plump body and the bumps on the base that are supposed to make the fruit easier for the distracted consumer to recognize as an apple. Cardboard signs stuck in greenmarket bins announce the small-“a” arrival of Baldwin, Cortland, Greening, Jonathan, Macoun—and Newton Pippin.

The Newton Pippin fills New York’s need for an ur-apple, because it is said (with the confidence that myth requires) to have come from a single eighteenth-century tree that thrived in a swamp in Newtown (now Elmhurst). Extant ancient apples, such as the Newton Pippin and the Esopus Spitzenburg, are sometimes called “heirlooms,” to acknowledge either their genetic continuity or their delicate hand-to-hand value. Here’s a Pippin, grown—perfidy—in Lebanon, New Jersey. It’s a tennis ball, less than half the size of an enamel Delicious but invested with the ur-apple’s peculiar ability to define itself as both typical and best. The sphere is flattened slightly, as if an exercise in sculptural perspective. The mottled-green skin is overlaid with washes of rose, themselves streaked randomly with unwatered scarlet pigment. Teeth move in, the globe resists, then completely gives way—crack! The first chew has a soft, high sound as apple acid attacks the roof, then the whole, of the mouth.

Who diluted all those previous apples? The perfumed afterthought called flavor begins to settle, renewed with each heirloom mouthful until the last meets the first. ♦

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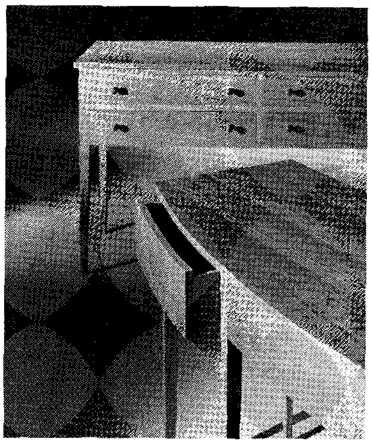

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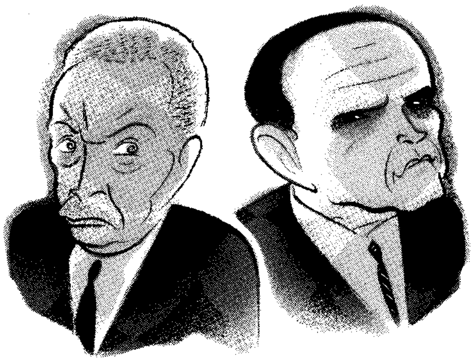
AROUND CITY HALL

RACE TO THE FINISH

Ever since the President, in his endorsement of the Mayor, decided to denounce racial voting, the name-calling hasn't stopped.

BY ANDY LOGAN

BENJAMIN WARD, New York's first black Police Commissioner, who served from 1984 to 1989, once said that racism is as American as apple pie. In that case, New York is by no means the most American of cities. Nevertheless, the question of racism is a constant presence here. It seems that almost every day someone discovers—or claims to discover—racism in others and publicly denounces it, sometimes out of anguish, sometimes out of anger, sometimes out of habit, and sometimes out of political calculation. The unwary may quite innocently fall afoul of this hazard. Last summer, a group called the Sheepshead Bay Beautification Program asked several local artists to paint murals for the ruined façade of what had been, in decades past, a fashionable Sheepshead Bay restaurant called Lundy's. After some research, Audrey Sackstein, a Brooklyn painter, decided to decorate the current neighborhood eyesore with a historically accurate portrait of Lundy's as it had been in its heyday, a generation or so ago; that meant that all the waiters would be black and the patrons white. Within two days after the mural was finished, blacks who work in the area complained that it indicated that African-Americans were suitable only for menial employment. Sackstein quickly responded, making some of the waiters white and some of the patrons black. However, angry passersby soon daubed tar on many of the white faces. She resolved the matter by painting all the figures in the mural, diners and waiters, as various breeds of dogs: a basset hound, a German shepherd, a Dalmatian. There were no complaints from dog-lovers that she had presented one or another breed as unduly low in status.



While New Yorkers were nonplussed by Clinton's comments, the Dinkins and the Giuliani camps went on the offensive.

ERIC PALMA

The animal world may be the way to go to dodge racial controversy. Roy Innis, who was defeated by Mayor David Dinkins in the September 14th Democratic mayoral primary, accused Dinkins of having used three of his supporters—the Reverend Timothy Mitchell, the Reverend Herbert Daughtry, and the Reverend Al Sharpton, all of whom are black—as "racial pit bulls" sent out to attack Rudolph Giuliani, the Mayor's Republican rival in this year's mayoral election, in an attempt to intimidate him. A black television reporter then accused Herman Badillo, the veteran Hispanic politician, who is running for city comptroller on the so-called Fusion ticket with Giuliani, of serving as a pit bull for the Republicans. After learning of the racial controversy over the Sheepshead Bay mural, a *Newsday* reader wrote in to ask whether the writer of a novel about the Civil War would be required to portray whites as slaves and blacks as masters. Just as the Holocaust is a frequent reference in local Jewish communities, the Civil War and slavery are often invoked in black rhetoric. Dinkins has often mentioned that his ancestors arrived in this country "whipped and in chains," on slave ships. Sylvester Leaks wrote recently in Harlem's *Amsterdam News* that for any African-American to vote for Rudolph Giuliani "is akin to holding a joint 'dress rehearsal' with the Ku Klux Klans to lynch one of our brothers."

It was in this racially charged political world that President Clinton, in his speech at a fund-raising dinner for Dinkins on September 26th, delivered what he clearly thought was a helpful sermon. He told the large crowd at the Sheraton that, flying up from Washington, he had tried to figure out why the reëlection of the Mayor, "who has a good record, who has a good plan, who has a good heart," was apparently by no means a certainty. He had concluded, he said, that there was only one reason New Yorkers could have for not voting for Dinkins: "Too many of us are still too unwilling to vote for people who are different than we are. . . . It's this deep-seated reluctance we have, against all our better judgment, to reach out across these lines"—to take "a leap of faith." That is, in this case, to move past the fact that Dinkins is black. A voice in the crowd shouted, "Tell 'em, Bubba!" A *News* editorial two days later, headlined "BUBBA WINGS IT ON NEW YORK RACE," called it "an inartful performance" that implied that those who do not support Dinkins were motivated by race.

It had been a jubilant day for Dinkins when he announced that the President would be the star speaker at the dinner, which would add an estimated million dollars to the Mayor's reëlection treasury. Dinkins had had a terrible few months; in late August, a Doug Marlette cartoon in *Newsday* showed him holding some pages from a pull-off daily calendar in which every day was Friday the 13th. There had been the Department of Investigation revelations of unethical contract procedures at the city's Parking Violations Bureau, which invoked the memory of corruption in the same agency in the nineteen-eighties; in fact, the new scandal involved some of the principals in that earlier episode, which had landed a number of local political figures in jail. There had been the announcement of the pervasive asbestos problem in the local schools, as the result of undetected fraudulent inspections, which delayed the opening of all schools—some for extended periods—and disrupted the lives of the families of New York's nearly one million schoolchildren; the episode remains a symbol to many of those families of how poorly they believe the city is being managed. There had been preliminary reports of the hearings of the Mollen Commission on the horrifying degree of corruption in the Police Department, whose achievements the Mayor commends daily. Widespread stealing and drug dealing on the part of some members of the force had not been noticed by the department until—mortifyingly—one of the leading offenders, Michael Dowd, made the mistake of conducting some business on his home territory, in Suffolk County, Long Island, and the suburban police arrested him. (When one member of Dinkins' Police Department was asked at the commission hearings, which began on September 27th, if he hadn't been afraid of getting caught as he raked in many thousands of dollars each week in illegal drug dealings, he said, "Who would arrest us? We were the police.") And there had been the six-hundred-page account, by Richard Girgenti, the state criminal-justice director, of the violence by young blacks against Hasidic Jews in the streets of Crown Heights in August of 1991—a series of confrontations which has now been reported on in such detail and over such a long period that those who read the most recent document half expected to come upon references to a grassy knoll. In a *Times* poll published this month, New Yorkers, asked to name the worst thing David Dinkins had done in office, had numerous suggestions, but a solid twenty per cent of them mentioned his handling of Crown Heights.

The common theme in references to the Mayor's connection with the official revelations of recent months was that he was someone who, while he took an almost childlike pleasure in the showier aspects of his office, had often been inattentive to the challenges of governing and was now asking to be reëlected for four more years of the same. At the time Clinton announced that he would be coming to the city to help, a *News*/WNBC-TV poll put Giuliani ten per cent ahead of the Mayor, whereas other polls made the race a dead heat. In a contest in which one candidate is white and one is black, in a city in which blacks are in the minority—and here they are about twenty-five per cent of the population—a reported dead heat means to some poll takers that the black candidate will lose, given the so-called white-guilt syndrome: white liberals often feel that, in view of the injustices of political history, they should in all fairness vote for the black candidate and will

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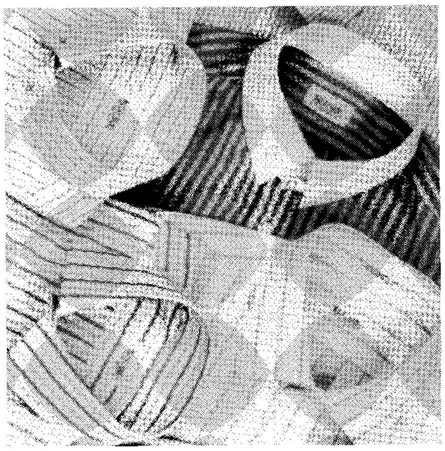

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A TIGER, A PYTHON, A WILD PIG, & RECENTLY, A LION. Raffles has had its fair share of strange and interesting characters. The tiger came from a visiting circus, the python from the surrounding jungle and the hog from a slaughterhouse nearby. On 23 January this year, two men in a lion costume danced to the beat of Chinese drums in the main entrance of Raffles to help usher in the Lunar New Year.

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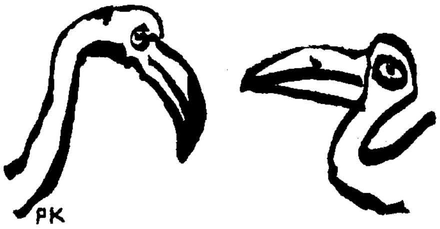
say that this is their intention, but then, in the privacy of the voting booth, eight or ten per cent of them will renege. (The most memorable example of this change of heart was the 1982 gubernatorial election in California, which Mayor Thomas Bradley of Los Angeles had hoped would make him the nation's first black governor. In the week before Election Day, and even in surveys of voters after they had cast their ballots, the polls gave him a solid lead in the race, but it was won by the white candidate, George Deukmejian, a Republican.) Giuliani likes to point out that in 1989, when he and Dinkins also ran against each other in the mayoral race, the polls showed him lagging by nineteen points shortly before Election Day, but he lost by forty-seven thousand votes, or two per cent.

Although the President's sermon against racial voting got an enthusiastic response from most of the Democratic guests, it did occur to a few of them that they hadn't heard about white voters' obligation to support Jesse Jackson, though his skin was a different color from theirs, when Jackson was giving Clinton trouble over Sister Souljah and other matters during the 1992 campaign. Jackson was at the dinner. After the President's comment on the role of race in voting, Jackson "leaped with joy," the *Times* columnist Abe Rosenthal reported. Rosenthal did not seem to think this was to Clinton's credit. (The day before, Jackson had visited Harlem with Al Sharpton to rally black voters to Dinkins' cause, saying, "We must vote with a passion." Jackson urged the crowd to recite after him, "I declare unto God, I am a registered voter. If I'm lying, let my false teeth fall out.") The President had impressed members of Congress with his knowledge of the health problems of the nation, but there was a sense that he wasn't very knowledgeable about politics in this city—which are often, in fact, quite weird—or about some of its politicians. (He called the Mayor a humble man "in a society that values self-promotion," seeming unaware that Dinkins has spent more time having his photograph taken than any other mayor in local history.) And when he complained that people were not willing to vote for candidates who were different from them, surely he did not mean that local blacks should vote for Giuliani. In 1989, blacks gave Dinkins almost ninety-five per cent of their vote, and without something close to that he will surely lose this time.

When Dinkins was asked recently if the nearly solid black vote for him wasn't an example of racism, he explained that voting for someone of one's own ethnic group constituted racial pride, whereas voting against someone because of his color or ethnic roots was racism—which was not exactly what the President had said. According to a front-page story in the *Times* on October 4th, Dinkins faced the danger that many black New Yorkers were deeply disappointed in the performance of the city's first black mayor, and—though very few of them would accept the President's invitation to vote for someone who looks different from them (that is, Giuliani)—they might well stay home, greatly diminishing his chances.

And what would the Presidential political philosopher do about Roy Innis, who said of the Mayor, "I'm blacker than he is"? Innis was endorsed in the Democratic primary by the *Jewish Press*, which is popular reading among conservative Jews, who remain deeply bitter about Crown Heights. With little money or following in the black community, Innis nevertheless held the incumbent Mayor to sixty-eight per cent of the vote in the primary, which was not considered a good sign for Dinkins in November. Innis carried some white sections of Queens and Brooklyn and all of Staten Island, the whitest of the city's boroughs, which technically would have won the voters there high marks with the President for having voted for people who were different from them—although their main motivation was to vote against that *other* black man Dinkins.

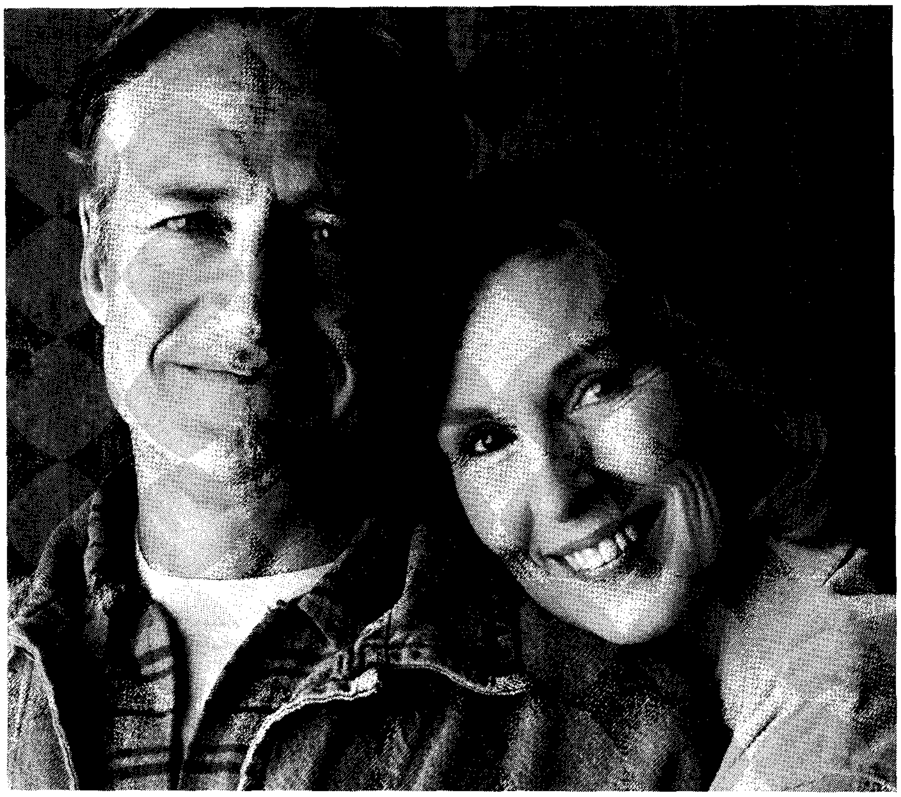
On the night of the dinner, many Dinkins supporters saw Clinton's comments as providing a wonderful boost for the Mayor's cause: the reminder that white voters often won't vote for blacks would anger blacks, who would come out to vote for him in larger numbers, the theory went, and whites who were



Your symptoms are bothering you, but you're still waiting to see your doctor about your enlarged prostate. Maybe it's time to stop waiting.

Ask your doctor about the prescription medicine PROSCAR®.

(FINASTERIDE)



Finally, a medicine for the treatment of symptomatic benign prostate enlargement

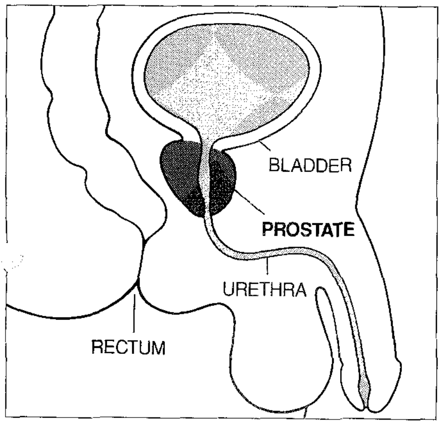
You can't make it till halftime anymore without having to go to the bathroom. You're getting up several times a night to urinate. It's beginning to bother you, but up to now, you've lived with it. The question is, should you?

Until recently, there wasn't a medicine that could help the condition known as symptomatic benign prostate enlargement or BPH. But now there is PROSCAR, the first oral prescription medicine that can actually shrink an enlarged prostate.

However, it is important to know the following: PROSCAR doesn't work for everyone. Even though the prostate shrinks, you may not see an improvement in urinary flow or symptoms. And you may need to take PROSCAR for 6 months or more to see whether it helps you.

How PROSCAR can shrink an enlarged prostate

As a man ages, a key hormone can help cause the prostate to grow. PROSCAR actually blocks the production of this hormone, so it helps shrink the prostate to a smaller size in many men. As a result, some men treated with PROSCAR experience an increased urinary flow and an improvement in urinary symptoms.



The prostate surrounds part of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder. As the prostate enlarges, it can squeeze the urethra and cause urinary problems.

Why you should see your doctor soon

The problem will probably not get better by itself. In many cases, the prostate continues to enlarge and the symptoms may get worse. So if your urinary symptoms are bothering you, consult your family doctor or a urologist and find out if PROSCAR is an appropriate treatment for you. It is also important to have regular checkups. *While benign prostate enlargement is not cancer and does not lead to cancer, the two conditions can exist at the same time.*

Remember, only a doctor can evaluate your symptoms and their possible causes. So don't wait any longer. You may find out that your enlarged prostate can be made into a smaller problem.

For a free, informative booklet, "Every man should know about his prostate," call 1-800-635-4452 today.

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Please see patient information on the adjacent page.

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susceptible to the white-guilt syndrome and its major symptom, a tendency to defect in the voting booth, might be shamed into hanging in there with Dinkins. However, a poll published in the *Times* on October 5th, which had been taken after the President's visit, showed that except among blacks Dinkins' support was down in every category that had helped him achieve his narrow win four years ago. He had captured thirty-five per cent of the Jewish vote in 1989; he now had twenty-three per cent. Racial polarization remained as strong as ever. Sixty-one per cent of all white voters said they would vote for Giuliani, and twenty-one per cent for Dinkins. Of the black vote, ninety-one per cent went to Dinkins and two per cent to Giuliani. The poll takers nevertheless declared the race too close to call. In any event, there was no sign that New Yorkers had paid attention to a word that the President said on this subject.

EARLY last month, someone had alerted the White House to the real possibility that this year, for the first time since the election of John Lindsay in 1965, a candidate running on the Republican line might defeat a Democrat in a mayoral race in the nation's largest city. This outcome would be a particular blow to Democrats in Washington, because only last spring Richard J. Riordan had become the first Republican since 1957 to be elected mayor of Los Angeles, America's second-largest city. It would be awkward for the Democrats to try to offer themselves as the party most sympathetic to the needs of the cities if the residents of both Los Angeles and New York opted for Republican mayors. Nearly every day since Dinkins took over at City Hall, he has laid the blame for New York's severest problems on the anti-city policies of what he refers to as "the Reagan-Bush Administration." There was some hope that the arrival of a Democratic regime in Washington would bring welcome relief from that routine, which had occupied the time the Mayor might otherwise have spent explaining why he hadn't moved to resolve local crises not dependent on help from Washington. Though the Clinton Administration, which has budget problems of its own, has not been able to deliver the help to New York that the 1992 Democratic campaign as good as guar-

PATIENT INFORMATION ABOUT PROSCAR® (Prahs-car)
Generic name: finasteride (fin-AS-tur-eyed)

PROSCAR is for the treatment of symptomatic benign prostatic hyperplasia and for use by men only.

Your doctor may prescribe PROSCAR if you have a medical condition called benign prostatic hyperplasia or BPH. This occurs only in men.

Please read this information, as well as the leaflet which accompanies your medication, before you start taking PROSCAR. Also, read the leaflet each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss PROSCAR when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups.

What is BPH?

BPH is an enlargement of the prostate gland. After age 50, most men develop enlarged prostates. The prostate is located below the bladder. As the prostate enlarges, it may slowly restrict the flow of urine. This can lead to symptoms such as:

- a weak or interrupted urinary stream
- a feeling that you cannot empty your bladder completely
- a feeling of delay or hesitation when you start to urinate
- a need to urinate often, especially at night
- a feeling that you must urinate right away.

Treatment options for BPH

There are three main treatment options for BPH:

- **Program of monitoring or "Watchful Waiting".** If a man has an enlarged prostate gland and no symptoms or if his symptoms do not bother him, he and his doctor may decide on a program of monitoring which would include regular checkups, instead of medication or surgery.
- **Medication.** Your doctor may prescribe PROSCAR for BPH. See **"What PROSCAR does"** below.
- **Surgery.** Some patients may need surgery. Your doctor can describe several different surgical procedures for BPH. Which procedure is best depends on your symptoms and medical condition.

What PROSCAR does

PROSCAR lowers levels of a key hormone called DHT (dihydrotestosterone), which is a major cause of prostate growth. Lowering DHT leads to shrinkage of the enlarged prostate gland in most men. This can lead to gradual improvement in urine flow and symptoms over the next several months. However, since each case of BPH is different, you should know that:

- Even though the prostate shrinks, you may NOT see an improvement in urine flow or symptoms.
- You may need to take PROSCAR for six (6) months or more to see whether it helps you.
- Even though you take PROSCAR and it may help you, it is not known whether PROSCAR reduces the need for surgery.

What you need to know while taking PROSCAR

- **You must see your doctor regularly.** While taking PROSCAR, you must have regular checkups. Follow your doctor's advice about when to have these checkups.
- **About side effects.** Like all prescription drugs, PROSCAR may cause side effects. Side effects due to PROSCAR may include impotence (or inability to have an erection) and less desire for sex. Each of these side effects occurred in less than 4% of patients in clinical studies. In some cases side effects went away while the patient continued to take PROSCAR.

Some men taking PROSCAR® (Finasteride) may have a decrease in the amount of semen released during sex. This decrease does not appear to interfere with normal sexual function.

You should discuss side effects with your doctor before taking PROSCAR and anytime you think you are having a side effect.

- **Checking for prostate cancer.** Your doctor has prescribed PROSCAR for symptomatic BPH and not for cancer—but a man can have BPH and prostate cancer at the same time. Doctors usually recommend that men be checked for prostate cancer once a year when they turn 50 (or 40 if a family member has had prostate cancer). These checks should continue while you take PROSCAR. PROSCAR is not a treatment for prostate cancer.
- **About prostate specific antigen (PSA).** Your doctor may have done a blood test called PSA. PROSCAR can alter PSA values. For more information, talk to your doctor.
- **A warning about PROSCAR and pregnancy.**

PROSCAR is for use by MEN only.

PROSCAR is generally well tolerated in men. However, women who are pregnant, or women who could become pregnant, should avoid the active ingredient in PROSCAR.

If the active ingredient is absorbed by a woman who is pregnant with a male baby, it may cause the male baby to be born with abnormalities of the sex organs. Therefore, any woman who is pregnant or who could become pregnant must not come into direct contact with the active ingredient in PROSCAR.

Two of the ways in which a woman might absorb the active ingredient in PROSCAR are:

Sexual contact. Your semen may contain a small amount of the active ingredient of the drug. If your partner is pregnant, or if you and your partner decide to have a baby, you must stop taking PROSCAR and talk to your doctor. If your partner could become pregnant, proper use of a condom can reduce the risk of exposing her to your semen (discuss this further with your doctor).

Handling broken tablets. Women who are pregnant or who could become pregnant must not handle broken tablets of PROSCAR.

PROSCAR tablets are coated to prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling. If this coating is broken, the tablets should not be handled by women who are pregnant or who could become pregnant.

If a woman who is pregnant comes into contact with the active ingredient in PROSCAR, a doctor should be consulted. Remember, these warnings apply only if the woman exposed to PROSCAR is pregnant or could become pregnant.

How to take PROSCAR

Follow your doctor's advice about how to take PROSCAR. You must take it every day. You may take it with or between meals. To avoid forgetting to take PROSCAR, it may be helpful to take it the same time every day.

Do not share PROSCAR with anyone else; it was prescribed only for you.

Keep PROSCAR and all medicines out of the reach of children.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PROSCAR AND BPH, TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR. IN ADDITION, TALK TO YOUR PHARMACIST OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDER.

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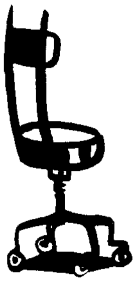
anteed it would, Dinkins, fortunately, has not had to have his speechwriters think of new things for him to say. With Giuliani as his mayoral opponent, he was able to recycle his worst charges against the Reagan-Bush Administration and, pointing out that Giuliani is a confessed Republican, lay them on Giuliani, whether Giuliani had ever supported such positions or not.

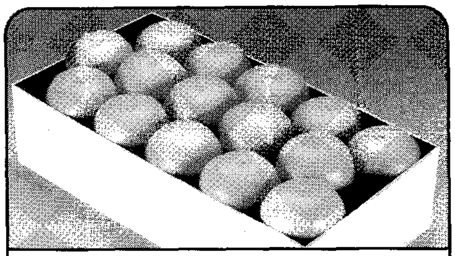
Actually, although Giuliani served in the Reagan Justice Department and it was Reagan who appointed him United States Attorney in this city—his home town—he never worked for Bush, having left federal employment in early January of 1989 to make his first run for mayor. And although he is a Republican, he is relatively liberal: no other kind of Republican would be deemed to have the faintest chance of election in this liberal-minded city, in which the Democratic advantage in registration is more than five to one. Indeed, as was also true of John Lindsay in 1965, in the voting booth Giuliani's name will appear not only on the line of the Republican Party but also on that of the Liberal Party—whose nomination Dinkins tried for unsuccessfully. As might be expected, however, during the campaign the Mayor has referred to his opponent as being of the party of Phil Gramm, Newt Gingrich, and Pat Buchanan, who are certified Republican bogeymen here.



Late in a campaign, candidates can get a little desperate. Giuliani's position on abortion is now firmly pro-choice, as it came to be in 1989, but a current Dinkins commercial points out that in years past Giuliani has wavered on this issue—which is not surprising, perhaps, in a Roman Catholic. The commercial is accompanied by a picture of the Republican contender which makes him look like a serial killer just before the law moves in. The President's decision to help Dinkins' effort might suggest that the Administration was interested primarily in the political well-being of the Mayor, but doubtless even more vivid in his mind were the problems of a 1996 Clinton reëlection campaign in which he might have to try to capture New York State's thirty-six electoral votes in the face of probably obstructionist—or at least inhospitable—tactics devised by a resentful Republican mayor of this city. It was decided to make the boost for Dinkins' reëlection a showy one, and the day before the dinner Dinkins went to Washington, so that he could fly back to New York the next day on Air Force One and be photographed emerging from the plane with the President.

THE President's sudden willingness to ally himself directly with the Mayor's reëlection prospects had been a wonderful surprise, since up to then Dinkins' pointed suggestions that a Democratic mayor of New York should by all rights have a special relationship with a Democratic President hadn't come to much. As it happened, the Mayor, who has close ties to Jesse Jackson (he directed Jackson's Presidential campaigns in this state in 1984 and 1988), hadn't endorsed Clinton until two days before the start of the Democratic National Convention. Not only that but his closest political ally, Manhattan Representative Charles Rangel, didn't endorse Clinton until a few weeks before the election, and later badmouthed him so often that Clinton was said to have put Rangel on the list of his top ten political enemies. (At the recent dinner, however, Rangel was on his feet cheering louder than anyone at the President's remarks on race.) A few months after Clinton's Inauguration, Dinkins told an unofficial campaign rally here that New Yorkers should vote for him because the city needed money "and I'm in and out of the White House all the time." In reality, he had met with Clinton at the White House only as part of a large delegation of members of the United States Conference of Mayors. After the dinner, however, Dinkins could look forward to covering a whole wall of his office with pictures of himself and the President—whether or not, after January 1st, that office is in City Hall. At the end of the memorable evening, Dinkins reached up and gave Clinton a bear hug and said, "For me, it does not get better than this."

Dinkins' favorite moments at the dinner were probably those when the President praised him for his speech denouncing Giuliani as being attentive, in typical Republican style, only to the problems of the rich, and commended him for the fact that crime has gone



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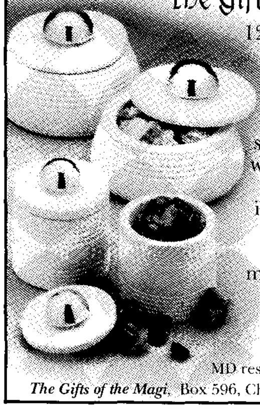

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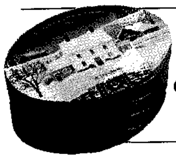

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down in the city—which the President, citing statistics deeply cherished by the Mayor, gave as a major reason that he should be reëlected. The fact is that in the rather significant category of murder the rate is down only in comparison with the staggering totals of Dinkins' first two years in office, when, for the first time in the city's history, there were more than two thousand homicides annually. And even last year's total of murders—nineteen hundred and ninety-five—is ninety higher than that in 1989, Mayor Ed Koch's final year in office. In any event, since murders are still being committed at the rate of nearly six a day, Dinkins is having some trouble persuading voters—though not the President—that he is the preferred crime-fighting candidate. In answer to a question in the recent *Times* poll on whether the candidates were tough enough to "deal with New York City's crime problem," forty per cent of the respondents answered "yes" for Dinkins and fifty-four per cent answered "no." For Giuliani the responses were sixty-eight per cent "yes" and fourteen per cent "no."

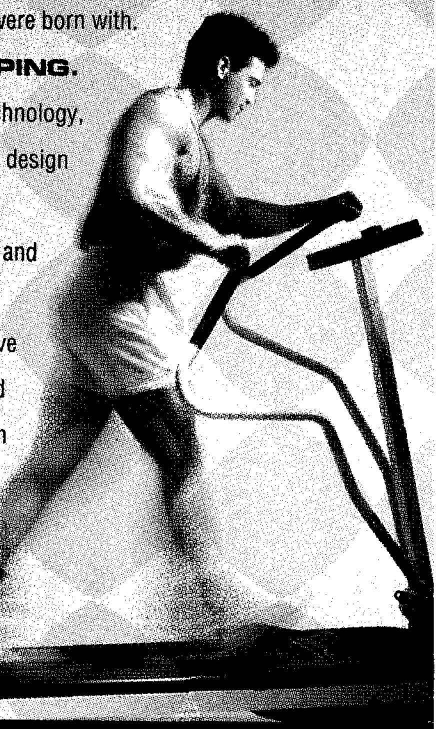
Part of the entertainment at the dinner was the introduction by the vocalist Phyllis Hyman of a song that will be used in a new city-promotion campaign. Its title—no doubt intended to be reassuring—is "New York, It Ain't Over!" On the minds of some of the dinner guests may have been a local issue that it sometimes seems will never be over. As the guests arrived and departed, on the sidewalk across Seventh Avenue from the Sheraton were several hundred demonstrators, most of them Hasidim and other conservative Jews, protesting the Justice Department's failure to announce Attorney General Janet Reno's decision on whether to hold an investigation into the possible violation of civil rights of Crown Heights residents in 1991. After the release of the Girgenti report, last July, there had been a clamor here for such an investigation, to be followed, perhaps, by a federal trial—the same maneuver that led to the conviction of the white Los Angeles cops in the beating of Rodney King. A leak from the Justice Department in late August suggested that Reno would decide against such a move. Cries of anger went up, in which the point was often made that in the Justice Department there seemed to be justice for a black man beaten by whites but not for a white man—and a Jew—beaten by blacks. Crown Heights had become a critical racial issue because of the belief in some local ethnic communities that the black Mayor had been too unwilling to move against people who were not different from him.

In early September, Reno announced that her decision would be delayed. It was widely reported, and denied by her, that the delay was a Clinton effort to protect Dinkins from the anger that a decision not to investigate would set off—anger that would probably swell Giuliani's vote. The burning racial issue here had now gone national. Two Republican senators—New York's Alfonse D'Amato, and Robert Dole, of Kansas—sponsored a resolution urging a civil-rights investigation into the death of Yankel Rosenbaum, the Hasidic Jew who was killed by blacks in Crown Heights. D'Amato said that Reno's delay "smells and reeks of politics." Dole announced that the circumstances of Rosenbaum's death in central Brooklyn in 1991 were "a matter of concern all across America." Among the problems facing the President and Congress were Somalia, Bosnia, the economy (stupid!), poverty, drugs, and the ozone layer. The Senate passed the Crown Heights resolution unanimously.

WITHIN a day or two after the President's appearance here, questions were being raised about whether he had done himself or the city—or, for that matter (except for the million dollars), the Mayor—any favors. When he arrived here for the Presidential primary, in April, 1992, Clinton himself said he wondered whether he would be able to win local support in view of what he described as New Yorkers' traditional hostility toward the part of the country he's from. In the end, New York gave him a larger percentage of its votes than any other state except Arkansas. After his recent visit, even some strong supporters of his national programs seemed to be inclined to ask what Bubba—which he hadn't been called here for a while—was doing messing around in their mess. That race was an issue in the mayoral election was, of course, no surprise. Early in the year, a group called the Partnership of Faith, representing four hundred local churches, synagogues, and mosques, had got the mayoral candidates to sign an agreement not to commit what it called "racial arson"—that is, not to resort to appeals to fear or hatred, including fear or hatred based on race, religion, or ethnicity. The expectation, encouraged by the Dinkins forces, had been that the dangerous-racist candidate would be Giuliani. In September of last year, Bill Lynch, a former Dinkins deputy mayor, who is black (at the time, he was Clinton's deputy campaign manager in the state and is now running Dinkins' reëlection campaign), said that Giuliani reminded him of David Duke, the former Ku Klux Klan leader, but didn't make it clear why. (True, they were both Republicans, for one thing.) After this year's campaign got under way, what the Partnership of Faith called the first low blow was struck by Jose Torres, the former light-heavyweight boxing champion, who is one of Dinkins' three deputy campaign managers: in April, he wrote in *El Diario-La Prensa*, the Spanish-language daily, that "people with racist tendencies sympathize with Giuliani," and that Giuliani was also supported by "those who believe that whatever's not Caucasian is insignificant." Then he said in a television interview that Giuliani appealed to anti-Semites and to supporters of the Ku Klux Klan. Dinkins pointed out that *he* hadn't made these charges. Nevertheless, in August he walked arm in arm with Torres at the head of the Puerto Rican Day Parade in the Bronx. Early last month, Rangel said that Giuliani had little to offer as a candidate except that he was not an incumbent (and thus was not getting blamed for everything) and that he was white.

Only after the President's visit, however, did the racist attacks pick up steam. Eric Adams, who heads the Grand Council of Guardians, an organization of black police and corrections-officers, and is a Dinkins supporter, seemed to be trying to help the Mayor with the Latino vote. He attacked Herman Badillo, a veteran local Puerto Rican politician, who is running on the ticket with Giuliani and is the only Hispanic candidate for citywide office. If Badillo was so much in favor of the Puerto Ricans, Adams said, he should have looked in that direction for a wife but instead he had married a Jewish woman. Badillo, for his part, said that Rangel would never have been elected to Congress except for the whites who voted for him in his heavily white district, and that, by the way, as was not generally known, Rangel's father was Puerto Rican. Rangel said that Badillo shouldn't talk about parentage, since he was an orphan. Badillo, Rangel said, "doesn't even know who his own parents are." Rangel seemed willing to concede the orphan vote to Badillo, but no one knows how large this is. Badillo said that although his parents had died when he was very young, he knew for a fact that they were Puerto Ricans—Latinos being acknowledged as of pivotal importance in the election.

On the last day of September, Dinkins went to Brooklyn to receive the endorsement of about sixty Baptist ministers. As they all stood around smiling and having their endorsement pictures taken, the pastor of the Bethany Baptist Church announced that "the element



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that can best be described as fascist seems to have grown up and flowered around Mr. Giuliani." The Mayor kept smiling. Another minister mentioned Mussolini. Finally, a reporter asked if the Mayor agreed with the ministers. "It was not my characterization," Dinkins said. The *News* speculated that Dinkins had committed calculated reticence. Giuliani said, "Look, there's no question if you're referring to an Italian-American and you use that name, there's something you're trying to do." By the following day, a coalition of Italian-American organizations had scheduled a protest rally at City Hall. A week after the President's visit, *Newsday's* City Hall bureau chief, Michael Powell, wrote, "For months, the election buzz has centered on Republican Rudy Giuliani and the race card. But when the card finally landed face up on the table the past two weeks, the Dinkins camp was the dealer."

Something seemed to be working for the Mayor. A poll published on October 6th in the *News*, which, in mid-September had put Giuliani ten points ahead, now put the race as a dead heat again. Betty Comden, accompanying Dinkins on a bus trip to senior-citizen centers around town, was encouraged enough to compose new lyrics for the song she wrote with Adolph Green for the 1944 musical "On the Town": "New York, New York, it's a hell of a town. With Dinkins up, Giuliani's down." The Board of Education had voted on September 3rd to keep the city's schools open on Columbus Day in order to help make up for the many days they were closed because of the asbestos crisis. At the beginning of October, Dinkins, trying to compensate for his supporters' reference to Fascists, joined Italian-American organizations in a successful effort to persuade the board to keep the schools closed on the traditional holiday. However, the October 9th issue of the *Amsterdam News* included a proposal that Columbus Day be abolished, since Columbus's arrival in the New World had led to "a massive slave trade." A Giuliani supporter on the Board of Education said that if the schools were closed on Columbus Day they would probably have to stay open on another local holiday, Martin Luther King's birthday, which would mean another racial crisis ahead. In the words of the city's new song, "It ain't over!" ◆

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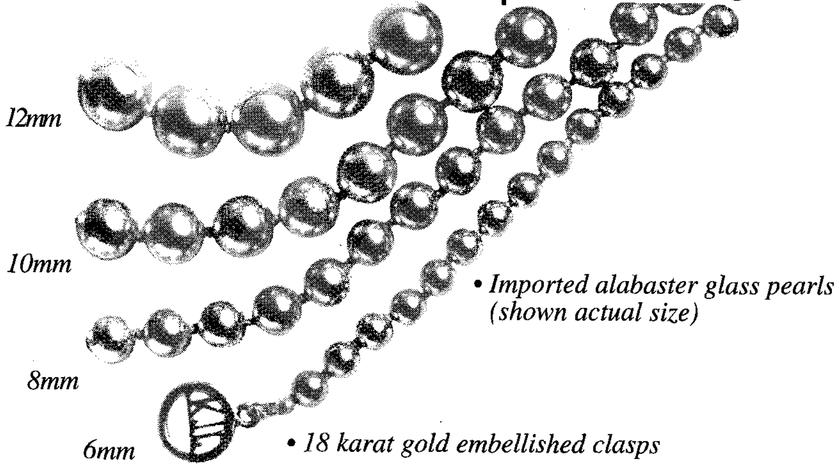

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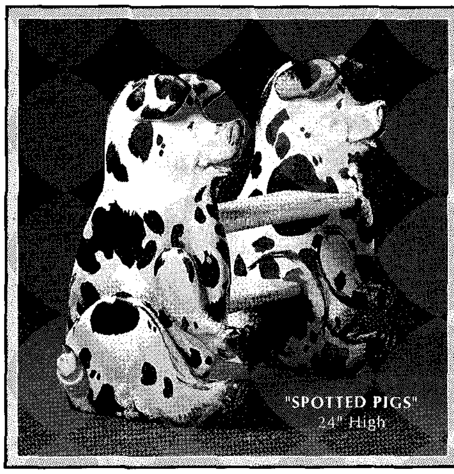
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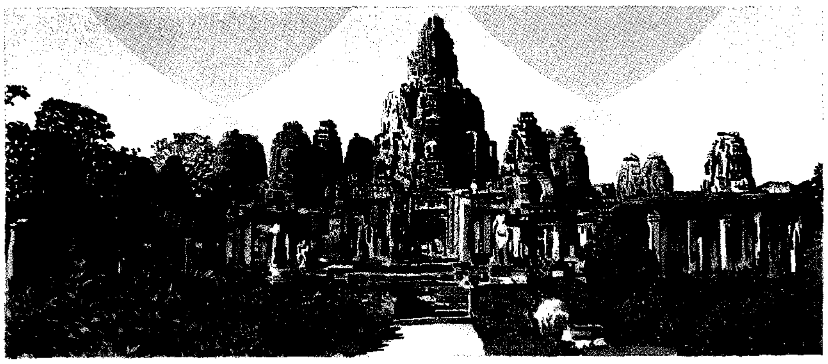
NOTE FROM CAMBODIA

POLITICAL RUINS

Everyone is waiting to see what the Khmer Rouge will do when the U.N. withdraws from Cambodia. A clue may lie in their pillage of the temples of Angkor.

BY ROBERT BINGHAM



Angkor Wat, symbol of Cambodia's heritage, is the heart of the complex of sacred monuments threatened by the guerrillas.

JULIAN ALLEN

At sundown in the Angkor forest, four miles from the town of Siem Reap, Cambodia, the massive towers of the twelfth-century Khmer monument called Angkor Wat are bathed in red light. The air is still, with a religious solemnity, save for a high-pitched natural alarm: the shrieking of hundreds of thousands of crickets hidden in the banyan and silk-cotton trees. These crickets have presumably been sounding off from time immemorial, but this summer their collective din seems to post a warning: the monuments of Angkor are once again being threatened by the Khmer Rouge, the genocidal ideologues who took over Cambodia in 1975, drove millions of citizens from their homes, and left an estimated one and a half million dead or missing.

The latest round of trouble began at the end of July, when Khmer Rouge forces, many of whom are camped in the northernmost section of Angkor, crept out of their jungle strongholds in predawn darkness and overran Banteay Srei, a tenth-century temple to the gods Shiva and Vishnu. Banteay Srei, or Citadel of the Woman, is a gorgeous pink sandstone structure, with busty dancing figures, and is one of the most treasured of the seventy Angkor monuments, which are connected by a network of dirt roads and narrow pathways that wind through the jungle. In Siem Reap Province, officials of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, or UNTAC, say that the guerrillas' advance was met with little resistance from the Cambodian national Army, for its men were under orders not to open fire inside the monument grounds. Because the Khmer Rouge threatened to destroy Banteay Srei if it was not surrendered to them, the officials told me, the government troops had no choice but to retreat.

An UNTAC spokesman in Phnom Penh said that the national Army had retaken and secured the area surrounding Banteay Srei as part of an August offensive, but other U.N. officials say that the situation north of Siem Reap remains murky and mutable, and that reliable information is difficult to come by.

In the wake of a relatively free and fair election, orchestrated by the U.N., last May, the question remains: What is to be done with the Khmer Rouge? It is a question to be answered primarily by the recently crowned Cambodian monarch, Norodom Sihanouk; by his son Prince Ranariddh, the newly designated First Prime Minister; and by the Second Prime Minister, Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge guerrilla and the sole Prime Minister of Cambodia until the

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election. (Hun Sen long enjoyed the patronage of the Vietnamese, and the Khmer Rouge have relied on his image as a former puppet in their propaganda against him.) Prince Ranariddh and his father are apparently willing to give the guerrillas an "advisory role" in the government if they promise to lay down their arms. Hun Sen, on the other hand, has taken a more stringent line against his former colleagues, claiming the government has "the legal right to wipe them out."

BECAUSE of Angkor's symbolic—and politically significant—legacy, Cambodia's warring factions have long evoked its majesty for their own ends. When I visited Siem Reap in August, I talked about this at length with Khin Vuthy, a thirty-year-old Cambodian UNESCO field director who is helping to restore the monuments at Angkor. Vuthy is a product of the Vietnamese-Soviet connection in Cambodia. Educated at the prestigious Pushkin Institute, in Moscow, where he studied Russian literature, he speaks Russian, English, Vietnamese, and his native Khmer. Although the past two years with UNESCO have been stressful, Vuthy seemed to me to be healthy and amiable, if worried. "Today, they take Banteay Srei, and tomorrow, if given a chance, they'll take Angkor Wat," he said of the Khmer Rouge. "It is all part of their post-election game, their drive to become legitimate in the eyes of the people."

Throughout history, the monuments in northwestern Cambodia have been plundered—by invading Thai armies, by French adventurers, and, more recently, by black-market treasure hunters with ties to Bangkok-based international art-theft syndicates—and they have also deteriorated in the grip of the Cambodian jungle. But the Khmer Rouge takeover of the Citadel of the Woman was a more open—and more insidious—form of depredation, and it took place just as the U.N., one of the only stabilizing forces in the country, had begun to pull out. The U.N. plans to be completely out of Cambodia by the end of the year, and, like Vuthy, many of the observers I spoke to feel that a new chapter of trouble may have just begun. According to one UNTAC engineer, a U.N. offer to leave behind millions of dollars' worth of construction and communications equipment is conditional on the government's assurance that the Khmer Rouge will not be a significant part of the country's final political equation. Whether the new government will accept such conditions—whether they *can* accept them—is another matter, the UNTAC man said. The Khmer Rouge are currently attempting to bully their way into a power-sharing agreement with the government, even though they boycotted the May election. Over the last year, they have been accused of slaughtering more than a hundred ethnic Vietnamese, many of them fishermen on Tonle Sap lake, just south of Angkor, and they have launched hit-and-run-style attacks on "the puppet troops" of the national Army. (The skirmishes between the Army and Khmer Rouge forces amount to a shadowy, undeclared war.) It's a matter of debate whether the Khmer Rouge will be bold enough to make a move for Angkor Wat itself—a representation of which has graced every Cambodian flag since 1947. A more likely scenario is that the guerrillas will advance on one of the other monuments. The U.N. observers I met around Siem Reap thought that Preah Khan, a crumbling Buddhist temple not far from Angkor Wat, would be a target of future Khmer Rouge incursions.

ONE of the ironies of the Khmer Rouge's position is that even as they hype their claim to be the rightful heirs to the monuments of Angkor, there is evidence that they are actively selling their cultural legacy down the river. The guerrillas, who are pressed for hard currency, have developed a brisk black-market trade in Khmer antiquities with Thailand. Khin Vuthy told me that in the past nine months alone twenty-two antiquities have been stolen from the Angkor Conservancy, the archeological compound where he works and, until recently, lived, along with a few colleagues. The conservancy, which was founded by the École Française d'Extrême-Orient in 1908 and is situated on the outskirts of Siem Reap, has played a crucial role in efforts to restore the temples, but it has recently been under seige. Its two large storerooms, holding hundreds of pieces of ancient Khmer art, have become a magnet for nocturnal attacks by bandits. As Vuthy showed me around the compound, the grounds of which were lined with disembodied heads and decapitated torsos of Hindu and Buddhist divinity figures, he told me about an incident that had taken place in May. "One night, I heard gunshots," he said. "I'm used to it. The gunshots are nothing here, but these woke me up because they were quite close to my ear. The director of the conservancy crept into my room and told me they were inside the compound. We lost nine Buddha heads that night, and also—we thought—nine guards." The thieves, dressed in olive green and wearing traditional Khmer scarves, held the guards at gunpoint and made each of them carry one Buddha head on a forced march into the countryside. (All nine guards later returned.) Two months before that, bandits had blown away the conservancy's front gate with a grenade launcher and had stolen ten pieces. The Khmer Rouge, who briefly overran Siem Reap in May, are strongly suspected to be the perpetrators of the attacks, and government troops have since removed the most vulnerable artifacts to an unspecified storage place in Phnom Penh.

Another irony is that between 1975 and 1979, when Cambodia was in the hands of the Khmer Rouge, black-market art thieves were by and large too terrified to loot the temples. But experts like Khin Vuthy maintain that the current dismal state of archeological research in the country is largely a product of that time, during which, accord-

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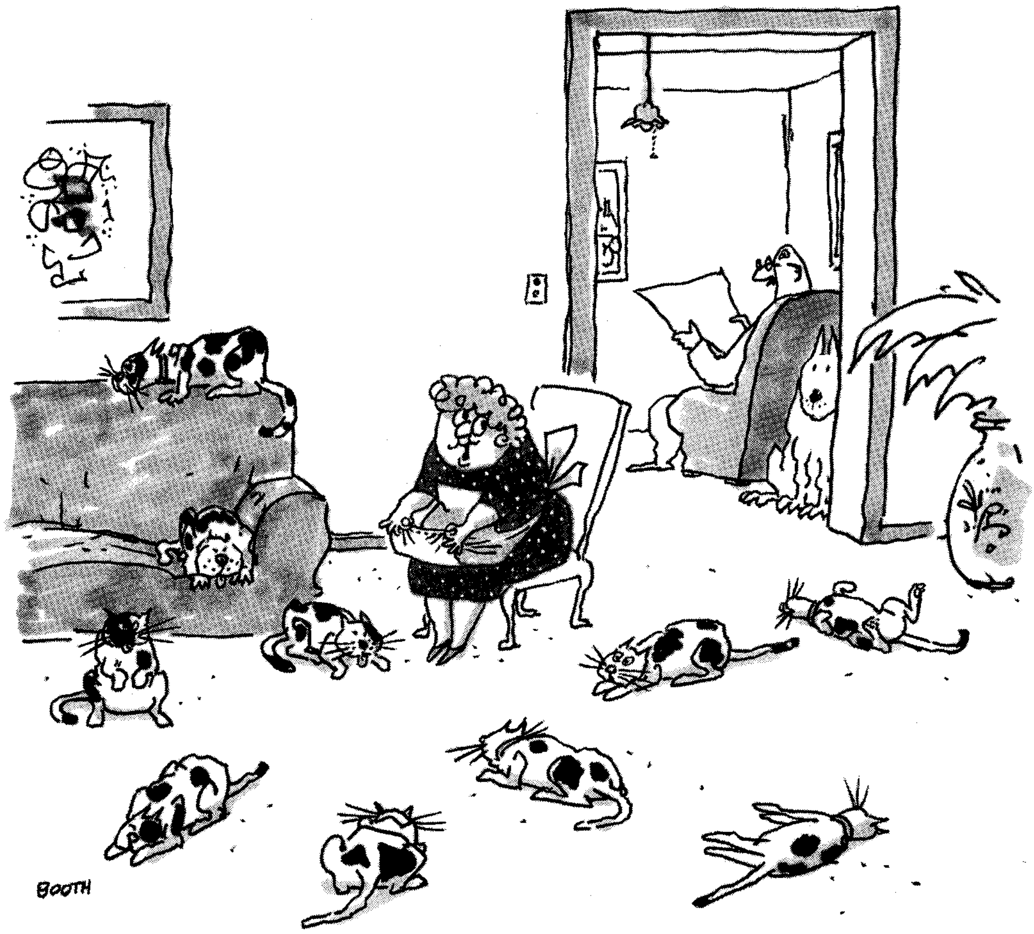

"President Clinton's new health plan will make Americans stop feeling so bad-tempered and mean and rotten all the time, and then the pussycats will all be very, very happy ever after."

• •

ing to Vuthy, the rabidly anti-religious and anti-intellectual Khmer Rouge killed off all but a handful of Cambodian archeologists. In fact, Cambodian archeology is in such disarray, Vuthy said, that the group at the conservancy is finding it difficult to meet Interpol documentation criteria that could help to track down stolen pieces. To make matters worse, UNESCO's operation to restore the ruins is in need of money, not only for the work on the monuments but for the defense of the compound itself. Recently, an expensive Japanese-made generator was imported to provide power for floodlights at night, but the compound's over-all defenses remain flimsy at best.

Meanwhile, the pillage continues, and, in a bizarre twist—which suggests that the struggle for dominance in Cambodia is, in part, a financial one—the Khmer Rouge have linked up with elements of the national Army in order to get the booty out of the country. The guerrillas have a fondness for Buddha heads, as it happens, and need vehicles in order to smuggle these large and cumbersome artifacts into their next life. As a professor of fine arts at Phnom Penh University explained to me, "When they are carrying heavy objects, they need a car, and it must be a vehicle that can pass through checkpoints on the way to the border. For this, they pay members of the national Army." After the heads are sold to Thai officials and businessmen, they often end up in River City, a multi-story boutique-crammed mall in Bangkok. Its top floors are reserved largely for Asian art, and here chiselled-off bas-reliefs, figurines, and various busts from all over Southeast Asia mingle with countless copies and fakes. The Thai government seems to have little interest in putting a stop to this illicit traffic—unless, that is, antiquities from Thailand's own ruins are involved.

The Khmer Rouge trade with Thailand remains central to the political equation in Cambodia. Not only do the Thais provide valuable hard currency to the Khmer Rouge in exchange for logging and gem-mining rights in northwestern Cambodia, but there is evidence that Thai military officers have repeatedly offered haven to the guerrillas themselves. In early August, Thai military officers were accused by UNTAC of complicity with the Khmer Rouge in the detention of twenty-one U.N. peacekeepers on the Thai-Cambodian border. In late August, the national Army was conducting an apparently successful campaign against the Khmer Rouge, driving them from their northern logistical and supply bases, but the guerrillas—with the help of the Thai military—were simply crossing over the border and escaping into Thailand.

How long will the international community stand by while Thai officials prosper from their sleazy alliance with the Khmer Rouge? And how far will the Khmer Rouge go in trying to carve out a share of power in the new political landscape in Cambodia? As of late September, fifteen hundred Khmer Rouge troops were reported by the U.N. to have deserted to the national Army. Some of these defectors, according to a relief official in northern Cambodia, may still be operating as agents of the Khmer Rouge. In any case, there are still at least eight or nine thousand guerrilla troops at large and active. As for the plundered Khmer art, recent reports from Siem Reap suggest that there is a glut in the black-market supply. This may be good news for private collectors, but a price will be paid by the Cambodian people, as the sacking of their cultural heritage moves into its next dark phase. ♦

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7 PORTRAITS

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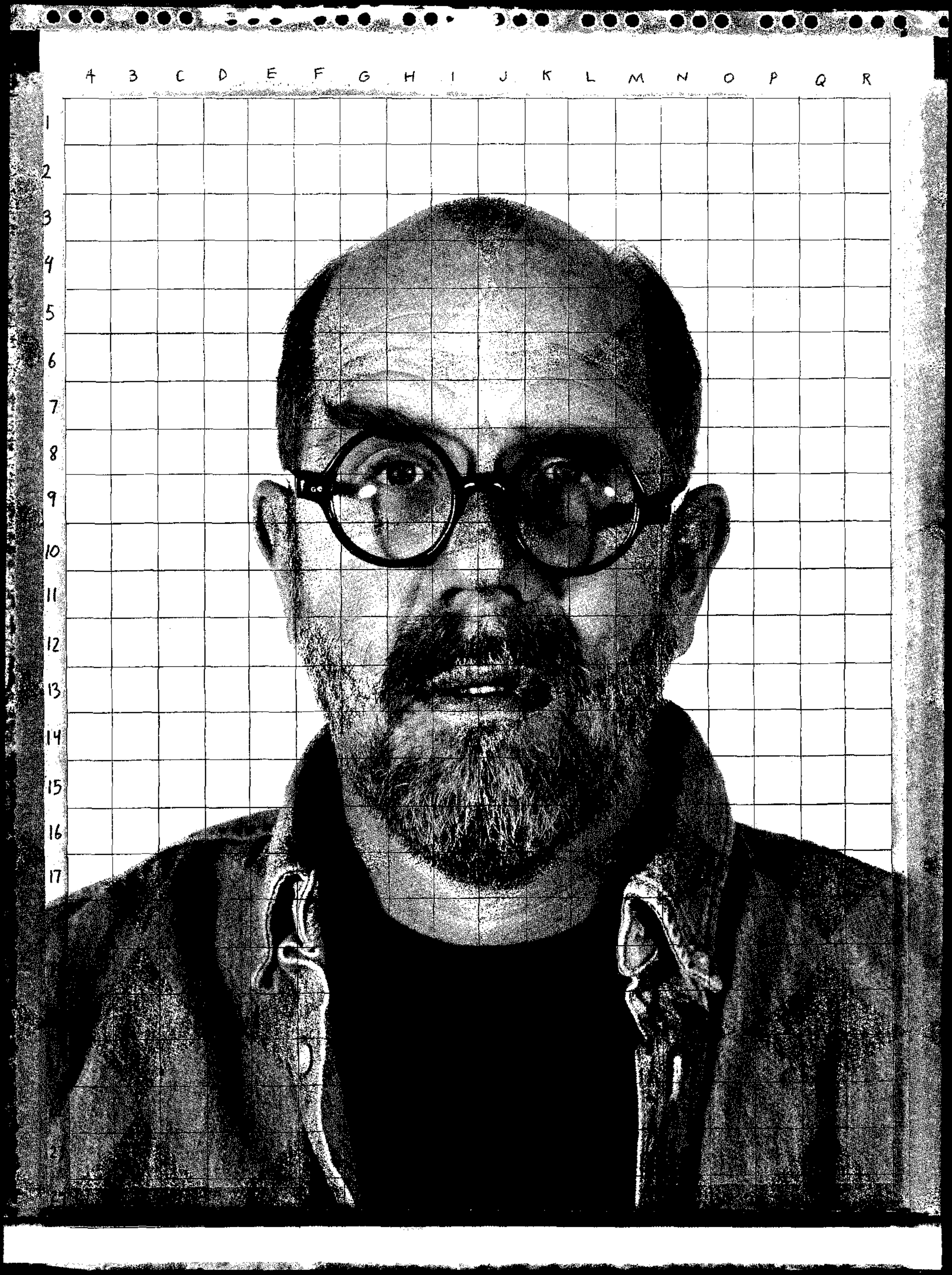
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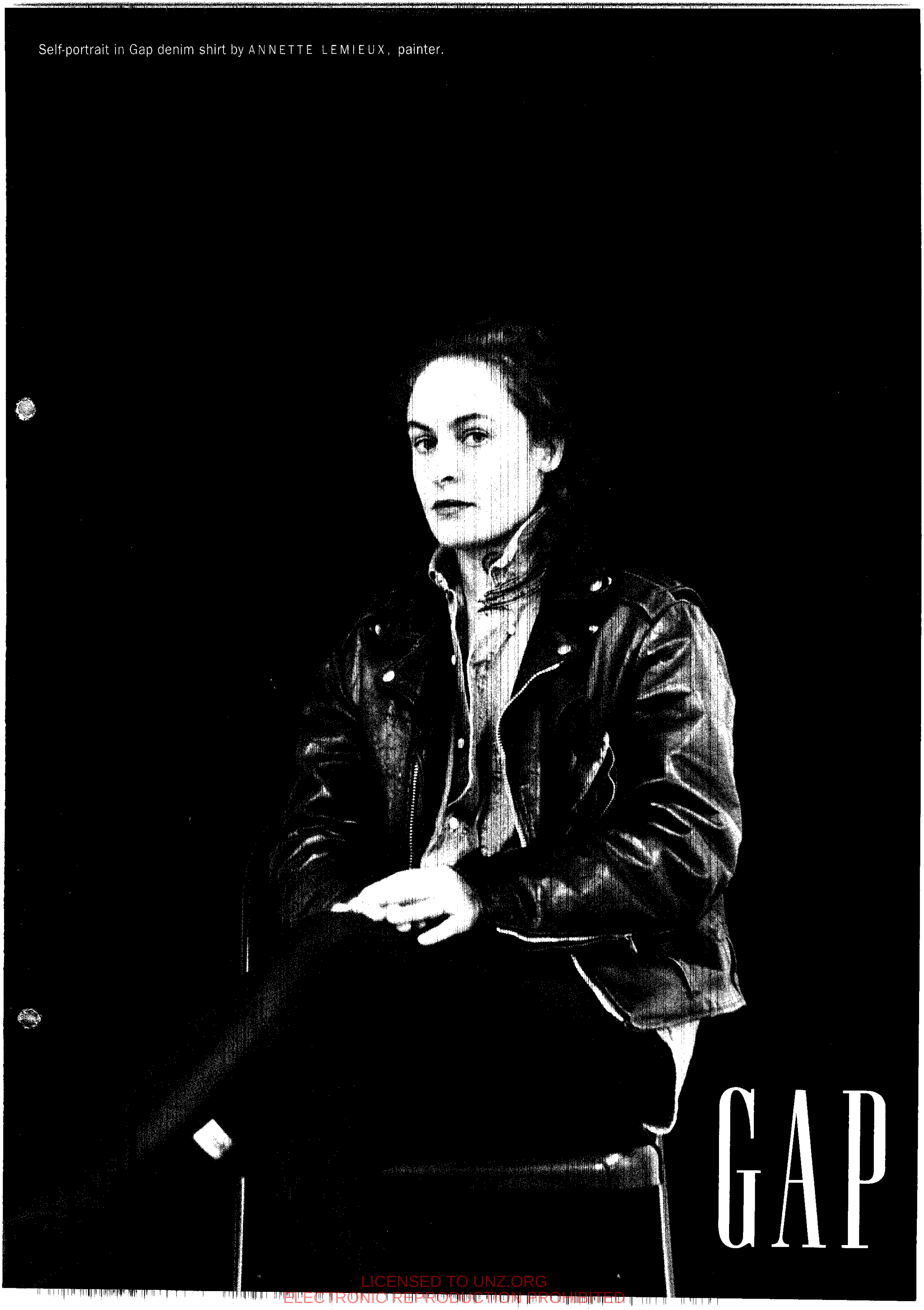

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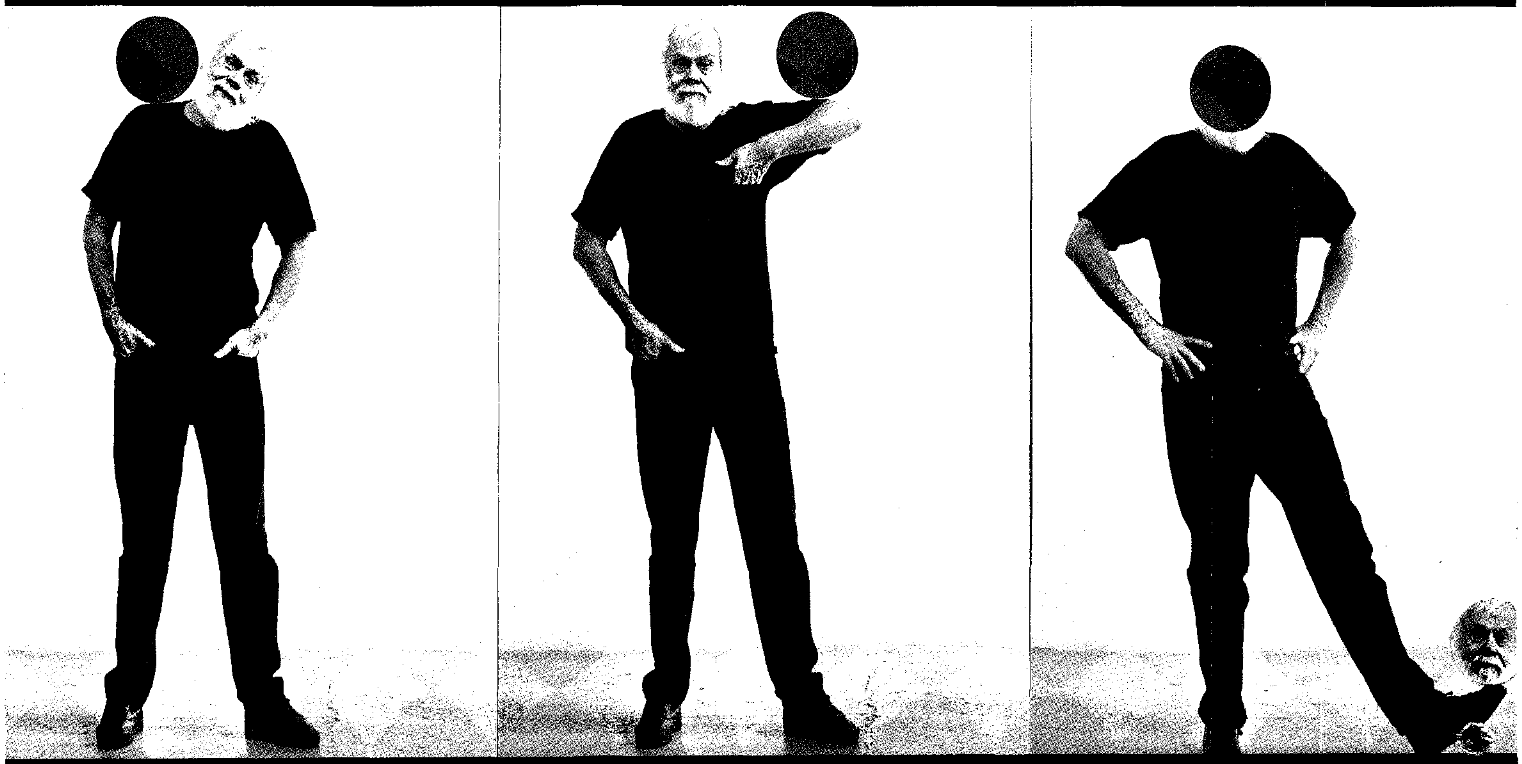

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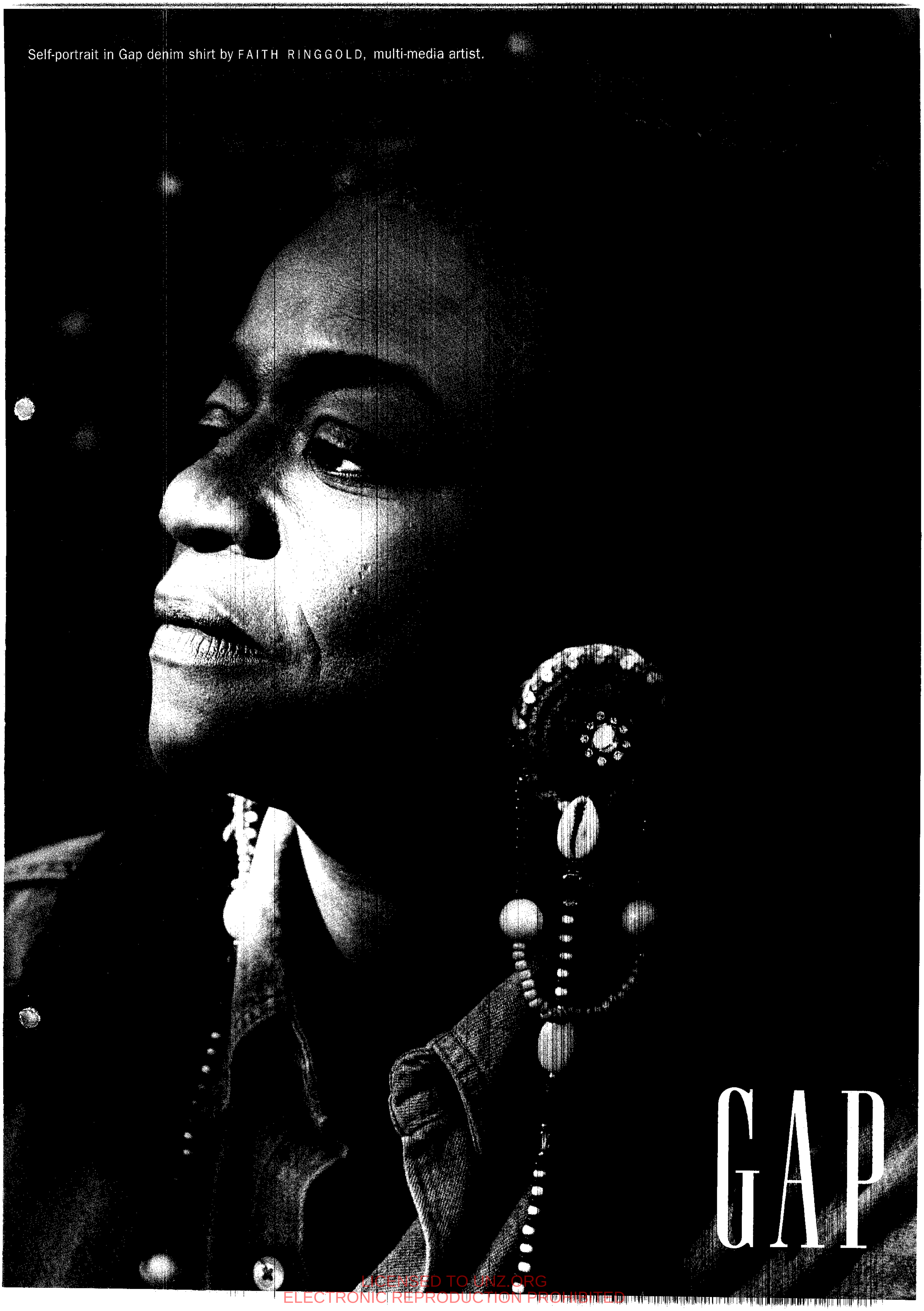
Self-portrait in Gap denim shirt by FAITH RINGGOLD, multi-media artist.
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7 ARTIST
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THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

A MOGUL'S FAREWELL

Steve Ross was probably the most powerful man in the entertainment business. Even when he was dying last year and his former allies at Time Warner plotted against him, his many famous friends still believed him to be invincible. And as they all came to bury him it was clear that there would not be another Steve Ross.

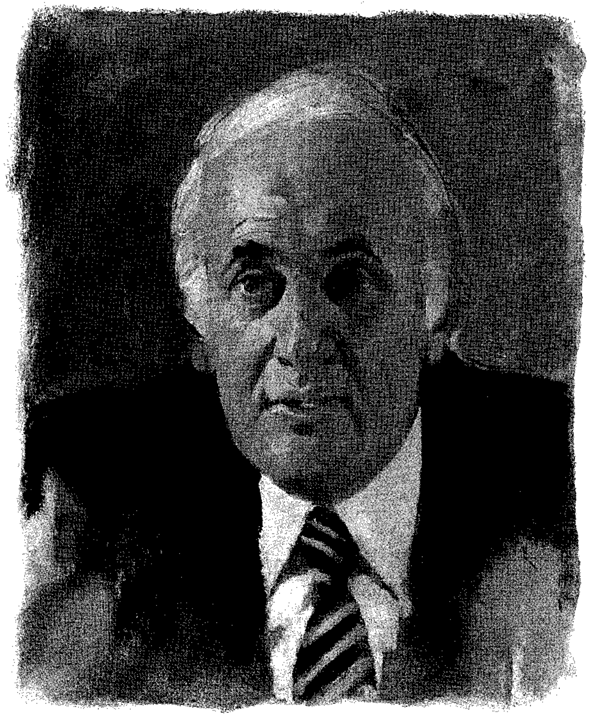
BY CONNIE BRUCK

STEVE ROSS would have loved his funeral, his friends and family later agreed. Its planning, however, had provoked dissension. His grown children, Mark Ross and Toni Ross, wanted to have a private family ceremony, and a memorial service later for that other "family" of thousands: all the friends Ross had made in his years of building Warner Communications, Inc., which was now Time Warner, Inc.; his current associates at that mammoth company; the Hollywood celebrities whom he'd cultivated; and more. But Ross's wife, Courtney, had insisted that the family hold a private ceremony for a select group of several hundred, including the celebrities, some of whom she wanted to ask to eulogize Ross or—in the case of singers—to perform. "It's what Steve would want," she is said to have told Mark Ross.

"But Steve isn't going to be there," Mark reportedly rejoined.

Courtney Ross, however, had had her way. And she, the producer of a couple of documentary films, threw herself into planning this event with a producer's zeal. Ross had died in the early hours of Sunday, December 20, 1992, in Los Angeles, where he had gone, after a year's agonizing battle against prostate cancer, for radical surgery. It had been a kind of Hail Mary play to halt the cancer; and, after further weeks of suffering, it had failed. Courtney Ross returned from Los Angeles to New York and set the funeral for Wednesday morning, at the Guild Hall, in East Hampton.

The auditorium of the Guild Hall was too austere, she decided; she preferred the Guild's art gallery. The pictures were taken down, and in the next two days the space was completely renovated: the room was repainted; a carpet was run up the center aisle; a stage was built; the lighting was adjusted. On the back wall, facing the room, Courtney Ross hung a huge de Kooning painting—one of her husband's favorites.



There had been only rare occasions in Ross's life when he had focussed all his intensity on something and been unable to bend it to his will.

BURT SILVERMAN

The funeral was scheduled to begin at eleven; by ten-thirty, the small drive in front of the Guild Hall was choked with limousines. Since it was two days before Christmas, many people had been away on holiday; Guy Salvadore, who had worked for Ross in the sixties, when Ross had been president of the Kinney company, and, after Kinney's acquisition of Warner–Seven Arts, had become "head of transportation"—overseeing the company's growing fleet of limousines, helicopters, and planes—had spent the past three days working furiously, flying people in from all over the country. Tony Battisti, who had been Ross's bodyguard for more than ten years, stood at the door, surveying each person who entered. It was too bitter to stand outside, so people pressed into the vestibule to wait.

It was not an altogether congenial group to be in such close quarters. In the days immediately preceding Ross's death, Gerald Levin, who had been Ross's co-C.E.O. and was formerly of Time Inc., had carried out a restructuring of the Time Warner board of directors which forced off several of the strongest Ross loyalists. Levin had not known that Ross was dying, but he *had* known he was weakened, and incommunicado—and had seized the moment. "The family viewed it as an assault on Steve," someone close to them said of the restructuring. "And Courtney did not want to invite Levin to the funeral, but Arthur"—Arthur Liman, Ross's attorney—"persuaded her that she should, because otherwise it would be a cause célèbre, and create even more dissension." (She had held fast, however, on the issue of inviting J. Richard Munro, the former chairman of Time Inc., who was a current director of Time Warner and had been Levin's agent—and a particularly combative one—in this maneuver. The rest of the board was invited; Munro was not.)

Crowded into this uncomfortably small space, therefore, were Levin, on the one hand, and those he had so recently deposed and their allies, on the other. Martin Payson, W.C.I.'s longtime general counsel and, more recently, the vice-chairman of Time Warner, who had been ejected from the board and, in the ensuing battle, had resigned not only from the board but from the company—his home of twenty-two years—stared straight ahead, stony-faced. Not far away was Arthur Liman, who for more than twenty years had been Ross's close friend, booster, and protector—and who within the past week, attempting to protect him to the last, had engaged in a furious scene with Levin.

If, knowing Ross's history, one had tried to guess who from the past would be present on this day and who would not, one would surely have been surprised to see, standing on the periphery of the crowd, Herbert Siegel, the chairman and president of Chris-Craft Industries, who was a veteran of a different corporate battle—the most protracted and bitter one Ross had ever waged. Siegel had been called and told that Courtney Ross wanted him to come, but the antipathy that he and Ross had felt for each other was so well known that many seemed taken aback to find him there. Not surprisingly, Jay Emmett, who had pled guilty in the Westchester Premier Theatre scandal in 1981—and who was the closest friend Ross had ever had—was not invited. Nor was it surprising, all things considered, that Solomon Weiss, the W.C.I. assistant treasurer who had refused to coöperate with the government and had been convicted of felonies in the scandal, *was* there.

There were Steven Spielberg and his wife, Kate Capshaw; Chevy Chase; Dustin and Lisa Hoffman; Quincy Jones and Nastassja Kinski; Paul Simon; Barbra Streisand; Anouk Aimée. Ross had made the stars his intimate circle in the last decade, but there were some people here who still recalled his former life. Caesar Kimmel, who had run Kinney Parking—and was now the manager of a gambling casino in Moscow—had first met Ross in the late fifties, when Ross was working for his father-in-law at the time, Edward Rosenthal, at the Riverside funeral home. (Toni Ross would smile when she mentioned how her father's occupation was listed on her birth certificate: "undertaker.") The investment banker Felix Rohatyn always liked to tell people that he and Ross had made their first deal on the back stairs of the Campbell Funeral Home (owned by Riverside) while a funeral was being conducted inside.

Now, waiting for this funeral to begin, Rohatyn was commiserating with Albert Sarnoff, Ross's former brother-in-law, who had thrown in his lot with Ross when Ross was taking Kinney Service Corporation public, in 1962. Rohatyn, in a philosophical and somewhat morose frame of mind, was commenting that it was "what the Greeks call fate" that Ross should have been allowed to engineer his consummate design, the Time-Warner merger—thus bringing into being the world's largest media-and-entertainment company—and then been denied the time he needed to try to make it work. "Although it may have been undoable," Rohatyn, who had had a hand in that merger, said. "As I get older, I am struck more and more by how, in these things, it is the intangibles that matter most—personality, culture, ego."

Did Ross, perhaps, after effecting the merger, come to think that it was, in the end, "undoable"?

Both Rohatyn and Sarnoff exclaimed that that was impossible. "Steve would *never* have thought that," Sarnoff declared. "He was the eternal optimist."

"But now," Rohatyn concluded, "it's like Schubert's 'Unfinished Symphony.' "

With that, the doors opened, and everyone filed in.

The service began with a reading from the Bible by someone whom many in the audience took to be a rabbi, but who was in fact Gershon Kekst, a public-relations executive who had worked for Ross for many years. Steve Ross had not been an observant Jew, and Courtney Ross had therefore decided to ask not a rabbi but Kekst, who was religious, to preside. The fact that a P.R. man was officiating did suggest, fairly or not, that this was a heavily managed event, bent on creating and burnishing a specific image.

The procession of speakers confirmed that impression. Ross's life had been his business, and, over decades, his closest comrades those who worked with him; but the only business associate to address the group was Liman. Reading from notes, Liman spoke about Ross in much the same way he always had: the tone was emotional, admiring, adoring.

"I rail, as you do, that I cannot speak to him just once more," he said, his voice quavering. "What is this magical quality that Steve had that drew us to him and has generated such emotion on our part? Steve was a giant of a man—giant in his accomplishments, giant in his vision, giant in his capacity for love, giant in his loyalty and concern toward others, giant in his energy, whether in business, on the tennis court, or on the dance floor, giant in his philanthropy, and giant in his generosity of spirit. He gave more to every friendship than he took. He made all of us feel important and good. . . . He considered nothing impossible. He inspired us to perform beyond the limits of our abilities and made us better than we were. . . . There was a personal side to every relationship with Steve. It was never all business. He derived his authority from his relationships, not his position."

Liman was followed, mainly, by the stars, and a few members of Ross's family. Quincy Jones spoke, in a sort of rambling, nonlinear way, often addressing Ross directly ("On a dance floor, you could really kill it!") and recalling times they had enjoyed together—like a Valentine's Day dinner at the Box Tree restaurant in New York. "And, ironically," he added, "Nastassja is expecting our baby this Valentine's Day."

Then Steven Spielberg, who had been one of the people closest to Ross in the last decade, went to the lectern. "For the last couple of days, I feel cold, I can't keep warm, I feel like there's a draft through my heart—and I know that Steve is up there, trying to figure out a way to plug up the holes. The day I first met him, he was on the phone, yelling at New York City. It had to be bigger, more ambitious, more colorful, *bigger.* I said to myself, 'Well, that's a typical C.E.O. He builds empires.' And then I realized he was talking about the 1981 annual brochure—he was like an art director! He had style, wit, pizzazz, he was creative. . . . Being in his life was like being in a world that spun a lot faster than it is."

Beverly Sills followed Spielberg. "I can't mourn Steve, I have to celebrate him," she began. "The first time I met Steve was when I came to ask for money for my bankrupt opera company. Steve didn't know anything about opera, but Carmen"—his longtime aide Carmen Ferragano—"said he should see me, and she said, 'She's called Bubbles.' " She knew that Ross thought big, Sills continued, so she came up with some complicated proposition about how Warner Brothers could film an opera, and there could be a PBS tie-in, and he said, "Bubbles, I never heard a more cockamamie idea in my life. Why don't you just ask me for the money?" After further talk, Ross said that he would give the more expensive package that she had proposed—if she would join the board of Warner Communications. And that was how their relationship of the last decade began. "He was like an opera singer," she continued. "He was larger than life; he knew how to make grand entrances; he knew he didn't have to yell at the top of his lungs all night to keep an audience's attention; he was always on a diet; and he knew how to share curtain calls." She added, "He had infinite grace. Whether you were talking to him in the boardroom or around your dining-room table, you had his total attention. He had this knack of making you feel that you were the only one in the room."

The singers' performances were interspersed through the program. At one point, Valerie Simpson and James Ingram sang "I'll Never Love This Way Again," and later they sang "How Do You Keep the Music Playing?" Paul Simon sang "Bridge Over Troubled Water." Barbra Streisand, who was said to dread live performances, and who on the trip East on the Time Warner plane had told Terry Semel, the Warner Brothers president, that she *could not* sing at the funeral, did. Saying that she had loved Ross as though he were her father, she sang "Papa Can You Hear Me?"

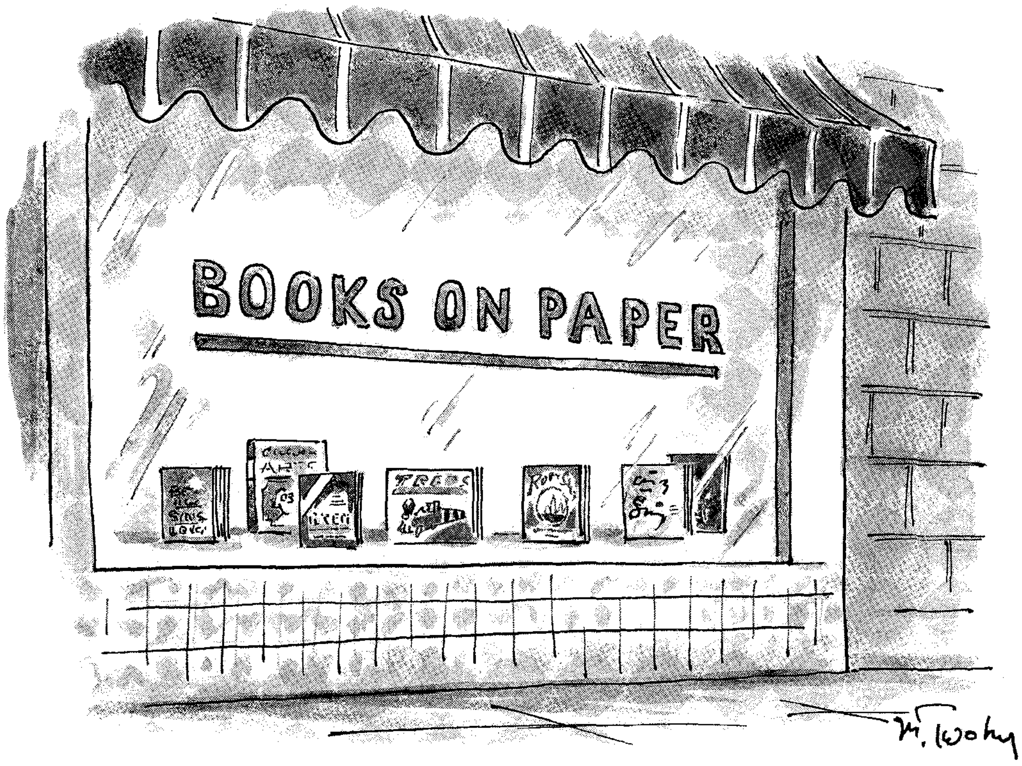
The family speakers, for their part, were brief. Toni Ross said just a few words, and Steve Ross's sister, Connie Landis, read a poem. Mark Ross, who had been, in effect, the master of ceremonies, introducing each speaker, went last. To many, his presence was the most poignant. He resembled Ross a great deal, and some of his mannerisms—especially a slightly awkward wave of the hand, a kind of extravagant gesturing—were so like his father's that it was startling. But many in the audience knew (and those who didn't were about to discover) that Steve Ross's relationship with his children—and his son, in particular—had been troubled, and that, however much the stars may have thought of him as a "father," it had not, in reality, been his best role.

Mark Ross noted, ruefully, that he had helped to decide the order of the speakers, and yet had allowed himself to follow Streisand—something, he knew, that his father, who planned such things with great care, would have advised against. "I can hear my father saying, 'Never follow Barbra!'

"I struggled to find my place in the ceremony today, as I struggled to find my place in my father's life," he continued. "It was hard to have a father who shared his self with so many people, and who considered so many people a part of his family." Gazing at the casket strewn with roses, he added, "I realize part of your legacy to me is your love for other people, but many times I just wanted you all for myself."

A chill rain was falling as the funeral cortege made its way through East Hampton. It passed by Nick & Toni's, the restaurant owned and run by Toni Ross and her husband (draped across it was a huge banner reading "Goodby, Steve, We Love You"), on its way to the Green River Cemetery. As the mourners left their cars, Ross's nine-year-old daughter, Nicole, and her friends were handing out single long-stemmed roses from flower baskets; each person was to lay a rose on the casket. The grave site was on a hillside, from which only a few other graves could be seen. The night before, more than a dozen pine trees had been planted around it, and blooming azaleas. A line formed, and everyone in turn stepped to the casket to lay down a flower. Like so much that had gone before, it was a moment carefully orchestrated and highly theatrical, yet also quite moving—a wholly personal gesture of farewell.

As the procession continued, Toni Ross drew the attention of her mother, Carol Maslow, to the brilliant-pink azaleas that ringed the grave. There were azalea bushes just like them in the garden of the Rosses' estate in East Hampton, and Ross, who had recently become a fancier of fine gardens, loved them. A man who, in the course of his extraordinary lifetime, had grown accustomed to being able to obtain any material object that pleased him, Ross had chafed over the brief bloom of his azaleas. He had said repeatedly that he wanted to find azaleas that would bloom longer, and even in winter. To Ross, as Liman had said, nothing was impossible. "See?" Toni Ross said to her mother, and pointed to the azaleas, blooming furiously on this sleet-gray December day. "There they are."

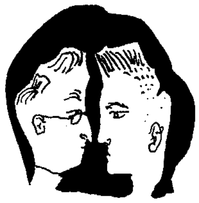


THERE had been only rare occasions in Ross's life when he had focussed all his intensity on something and been unable to bend it to his will. In the course of researching a biography of him, I have found that generally, when he concentrated and *fought*, he prevailed. He proceeded from an innate optimism, a belief in his powers, and a consequent conviction that what others might deem impossible would prove to be doable; indeed, it was the kind of spirit that informed the movies of the thirties and forties, which he had grown up on, and of which he became a devotee in his later years.

It was the ideal credo for a freewheeling entrepreneur out to build an empire from scratch, and it had served Ross well. In the space of thirty years he had done just that. In the sixties, he had engineered the merger of his father-in-law's business, Riverside funeral homes, with Kinney Parking, and the resulting company's going public, and its process of ceaseless and somewhat motley agglomeration, as it acquired cleaning and construction-related companies. Then, with the acquisition of a talent agency, Ashley Famous, in 1967, quickly followed by that of Warner–Seven Arts, in 1969, Ross had effectively launched himself; he left behind the other businesses—funeral, parking, cleaning—as merely the detritus from his launch, and entered the realm of entertainment and communications companies, for which he was by talent and temperament uniquely suited.

The seventies were the golden age at Warner Communications. Greater individual wealth, greater corporate growth, greater business triumphs would come later, but executives who were there then would recall it, with emotion, as the best of times. That halcyon period, however, was truncated by a series of crises in Ross's life. One of his close friends and business colleagues, Ken Rosen, was left brain-damaged after being thrown from a horse. His second wife, Amanda Burden, the stepdaughter of William Paley, left him. And a lengthy criminal investigation of illegal transactions between executives at W.C.I. and the Westchester Premier Theatre, a mob-run enterprise, became Ross's crucible; in 1981, Jay Emmett, who was a co-president of W.C.I., pleaded guilty to felony charges that involved having signed false vouchers, and Solomon Weiss, the company's assistant treasurer, went to trial, was convicted of mail fraud, racketeering, and perjury, and was sentenced to five years of probation and community service. Ross himself only narrowly escaped indictment, and he employed a legal strategy (in his testimony when he was deposed) that used Emmett, his best friend, as a buffer to protect himself.

Hard on the heels of Weiss's conviction came the near-collapse of Atari, W.C.I.'s video-game division, which had in just a few years achieved a dazzling rate of growth. Trouble at the wunderkind division had been prefigured for some time, but, despite those warning signs, Ross (who had somewhat earlier given notice that he intended to sell stock) had continued to make ebullient statements about Atari, and managed to finish selling roughly twenty million dollars' worth of stock just a month before the shortfall of earnings at Atari was announced, in December of 1982, and W.C.I. stock plummeted. In the ensuing free fall, which continued for the next eighteen months, Atari's collapse brought W.C.I. to the very brink of bankruptcy. Vulnerable throughout this period, Ross had been threatened by Rupert Murdoch and then rescued by Herbert Siegel, of Chris-Craft, in the guise of a white knight. But Ross found the incursions on his autonomy by Siegel, his would-be partner, intolerable; and the two men engaged in mortal combat for several years.



Through these years of struggle, Ross was counted out again and again; but he was—more than anything else—a survivor. He had the resilience of a fierce competitor, to whom adversity was one more contest to win, and he had the ruthlessness to do whatever the winning required. In 1989, a bid by Paramount Communications for Time Inc. fundamentally changed the stock-for-stock construction of the Time-Warner merger, which, as initially conceived, would have had little debt; instead, Time Inc. acquired W.C.I. for cash, mainly, in a transaction that left the combined entity with sixteen billion dollars of debt. Faced with this massive burden, Ross, with his congenital optimism and an approach that had performed well for him in the past, had turned to the job of making it right. He would *not* sell assets, as Nicholas Nicholas, then his co-C.E.O. and the former president of Time Inc., wanted him to do, but would instead take the joint-venture route. He had done it years earlier, in the late seventies, when W.C.I. and American Express formed Warner Amex Cable, and from Ross's standpoint it had worked like a charm: a partner—of a separate entity, not the parent company—had contributed fifty per cent of the capital, but Ross had maintained control. That, surely, was the paradigm that he wanted to follow—but now at a more elevated level, and, because of its global context, with a fancier name: "strategic alliance."

Ross was in Paris for the opening of the new Opéra-Bastille (W.C.I. was a major benefactor), which took place on the bicentennial of Bastille Day, July 14, 1989; the same day, the Delaware Chancery Court handed down its decision refusing to grant Paramount's requested injunction and thus paving the way for the Time-Warner transaction. It may well have been the ultimate moment of celebration in Ross's life. He and Courtney were staying at the Ritz, as was their custom, and their entourage included the Warner directors William vanden Heuvel and Beverly Sills, and Quincy Jones. The Group of Seven was meeting in Paris, and many heads of state were staying at the Ritz; Ross, vanden Heuvel said, "was treated like a head of state." Jones later recalled Ross's "walking down the Champs-Élysées as though the whole celebration were for [his] victory."

But Ross, characteristically, was not *only* celebrating. "Steve was meeting in Paris with Agnelli and also François Dalle," vanden Heuvel recalled. Giovanni Agnelli was chairman of Fiat, and Dalle was the vice-president of Nestlé. "He saw that debt as the enemy, and ever since Davis"—Martin Davis, who was chairman and C.E.O. of Paramount—"had come in, in June," precipitating the assumption of debt, "Steve had been figuring out how to reduce it. His idea was to get three or four major entities who would be helpful to Time Warner and motivate them to help by their having a major stake. He wanted to have major leaders of the industrial world as his partners. Steve felt if you had Nestlé, Agnelli, and Toshiba (or someone like that in the Far East), it would be great. . . . The problem, though, from [these prospective partners'] point of view, was asking them to put a major block of money into something where they didn't have any say. What he was offering them was a front-row seat in the telecommunications world."

It may be, however, that in this latest stretch of the ascent that had composed his life, Ross's reach had finally exceeded his grasp. For what began now, following his greatest triumph, was a period in which the gambits, strategies, and personal proclivities that had meshed and worked so brilliantly for Ross in the past did not seem to work anymore.

His experience with the French pay-television company, Canal +, was illustrative. Warner Brothers had been an active supplier of movies to Canal + (which also owned stakes in pay channels in a number of other European and African countries, and had become the largest buyer of American film rights in Continental Europe), and now Canal + was also becoming involved in large film co-production deals. Ross had known the company's venerable chairman, André Rousselet (a close friend of President François Mitterrand, and his former chief of staff), and its C.E.O., Pierre Lescure, for several years. They would have made very attractive European partners.

Some of the relationship-building groundwork, moreover, had already been laid. By the late eighties, W.C.I. had almost become an honorary French citizen. It had been a generous contributor to a number of French cultural causes besides the Opéra-Bastille. And, in the midst of all this beneficence, Ross had succeeded in making a friend of Jack Lang, the iconoclastic former Minister of Education and Culture, who, after taking office in 1981, became famous for proposing a crusade against the "cultural imperialism" of the United States—"this financial and intellectual imperialism that no longer grabs territory, or rarely, but grabs consciousness, ways of thinking, ways of living."

Concerning the friendship that had developed between Ross and Lang, Lescure said, "Lang was not fighting the Americans. He was fighting to protect French culture—and Steve was one of the first to understand that. He knew that if you wanted to be involved in this new market, you would have to share a lot"—in co-production, that is. "There was one American distributor—whom I will not name—who said, 'Our products are the best. You have to buy them. You don't have anything to compare.' Steve would never have said that."

COVENTRY

There was one who was put out of his house
and another that played by a pond
of a lateness growing,

one that scalded his hand.

And now, he said, please deny there was ever a house.
But there was one and you were my mirror in it.
These lines almost convey the comfort of it,
how all things fitted together in their way.
But it was funny and we left it—
her address, her red dress.

Just stay out in the country a lot.
You have no house. The trees stand tentless,
the marmoreal floors sweating . . .
A delusion, too.

Good thing. Good luck.
You'd have to stay in Coventry.
But I'm already there, I protested.
Besides, doesn't any leaf or train want me
for what I'll have stopped doing when I'm there,
truly there? Yet who am I to keep anything,
any person waiting? So we diverged
as we approached the city.

My way was along straight boulevards
that became avenues, with barrels of trash burning
at each corner. The sky was dark but the blue light in it
kept my courage up, until the watch spring
broke. Someone had wound it too tight you see.
Then I could only giggle at the odd bricks,
corners of tenements, buildings to be leased.
I fainted, honey.

And I never saw you again
except once walking fast
across the Victorian station
lit by holiday flares
yet strangely dumb and rumorless
like all the sleep and games that jammed us here.

—JOHN ASHBERY

Lescure found Ross's personal style appealing, too. "When I went to his office for the first time, there was Art Deco furniture that you could sell at auction," he said. "On the wall were de Koonings. Each piece was his personal choice. He saw in my eyes that I liked this. If you are in the entertainment business, it is impossible not to have an aesthetic point of view."

He also seemed to consider Ross something of an original—a surprising character to encounter as the chairman of one of the world's largest corporations. He recalled two incidents that had convinced him of Ross's anomalousness. The first occurred at the opening of the Opéra-Bastille. "The G-7 was meeting in Paris, Bush was here, and the police, for security, asked that everyone arrive very early at the opera. I convinced my girlfriend to be on time, for the first time," Lescure, who was then seeing the actress Catherine Deneuve, said. "We arrived, we were shown to our seats in the balcony, and we are in an empty hall. We were the *first*. She said, 'This is the last time.' After ten minutes, another couple came—it was Steve and Courtney. After that, the African ambassadors came. Ten metres from where we were, there was a special balcony for the photographers. One of them had a zoom lens, and he saw Steve was wearing a Batman pin in his lapel. He said, 'Aha! Batman!' Steve reached into his pocket—he had his pockets full of them—and started handing out these pins to the photographers. Then the African ambassadors said, 'Please, could we have one?' Steve was standing on the balcony, handing out pins to everyone.

"Another time, Steve was here, with Jerry Levin and Ed Aboodi"—Oded Aboodi was a close adviser of Ross's—"talking to me and André and others, and he was explaining to us the picture he has of Time Warner in the year 2001: interactive cable, music, etc.—all amazing. And at the end he turned to Rousselet (who is *so* French) and said, 'Time Warner will be present in so many ways in the daily lives of the American people and people around the world—and to be present in the daily life means many things.' With that, he opens a big bag—and brings out a Bugs Bunny T-shirt! In France, it would be so unusual for a chairman to be so involved in the product. Usually, the chairman will be good at the financial side, a good manager, but ask him about programming and it is another planet. He may not know what kind of programming they have."

As Lescure described his and Rousselet's relationship with Ross, it all sounded very familiar: Ross had been adroit, savvy, charming—and singular enough to cause them to remark upon it. In the end, however, despite all Ross's romancing, and despite their being eager to do business with Time Warner on individual projects, they rejected his advances for the "strategic alliance." Rousselet, for his part, said that "the investment required was too great," and also expressed a general, amused skepticism; to him the romancing had been transparent. "He is a great seducer, and he has a wonderful smile—even if one should not believe everything he says," Rousselet said, smiling himself.

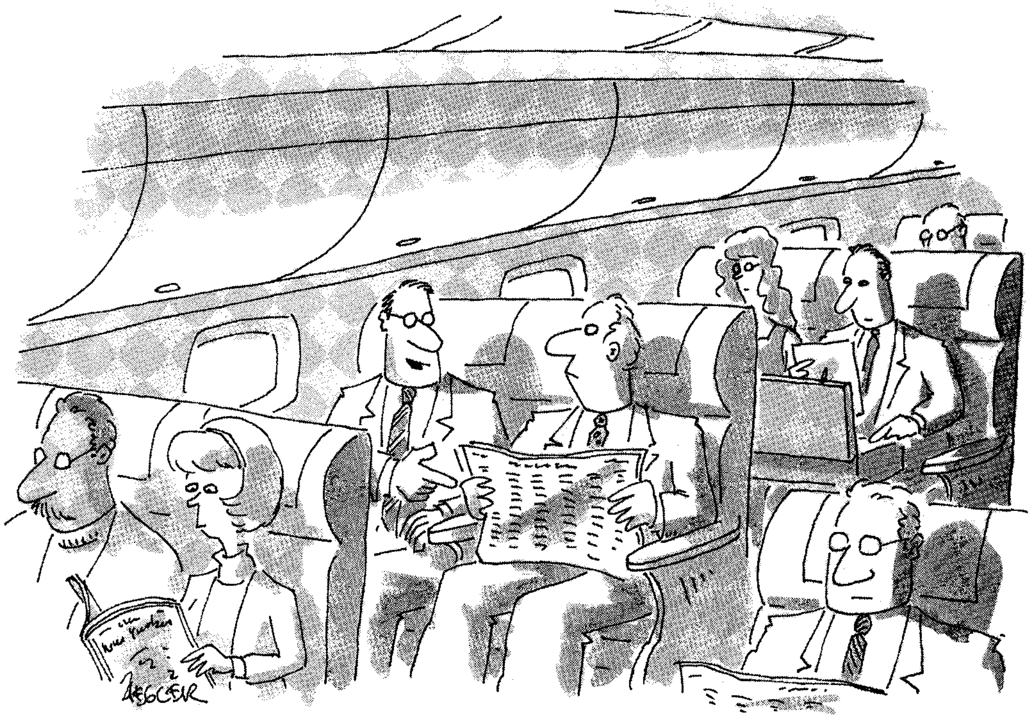
Lescure explained their lack of interest by saying, "We are not a bank. By which I mean that if we put the money in an investment we want to be involved. And what participation would we have here in what was going on there? We would have been a passive investor—and, yes, that was what Steve Ross wanted."

The assets that Ross was going to put into this joint venture—Time Warner's cable, its movie studio, and HBO—were, of course, attractive ones. But they were being offered on his terms. And what Ross, the world-class salesman, was really selling here was himself—the chance to come along for the ride with someone who had proved in the past that he could see into the future, and was confident that he still could.

It was precisely this, however, that Lescure was not buying. "I think that ten, twenty years ago he had a real capacity to look into the future—when he saw cable, and it was in its infancy," he said. "But the things he talks about today are more evident." He was referring to the presentation Ross had made to them about Time Warner in the year 2001. "He sees *generally*. But he cannot say, 'Invest *here*.' It will be for the people around him to do that."

And so it had gone for Ross. He had scoured the world for buyers (reaching out as far as to the Sultan of Brunei) and in the end, after two years' gruelling effort, had succeeded in snaring only Toshiba and C. Itoh (now called Itochu), and, together, they had invested a disappointing billion dollars.

IT had been a punishing period in other ways as well. Time Warner was engulfed in waves of shareholder outrage in the summer and fall of 1991, and to many of those shareholders Ross appeared the personification of all that was wrong with the company. In attempting to raise about three billion dollars in a "rights" offering, Time Warner had added to it a complicated, coercive twist, which elicited such a scathing reaction from shareholders that the company's outstanding shares lost almost twenty-five per cent of their value. (The offering was ultimately revised.) And in the midst of the rights-offering maelstrom press articles appeared proclaiming that Ross's compensation for 1990 was $78.2 million. Ross repeatedly tried to defend himself by pointing out that $74.9 million of that represented a onetime payout for his interest in Warner as a result of the merger, and attempted to portray that bounty as a founder's due



"Hi. I'm new around here."

(this despite the fact that he had never owned more than one or two per cent of W.C.I. or any of its predecessor companies, and thus had never exposed himself to downside risk). He told those close to him that he did not understand the attacks on him in the press; apparently, everyone in his small circle was similarly myopic or, at least, did not dare to explain to him how such things were fairly perceived.

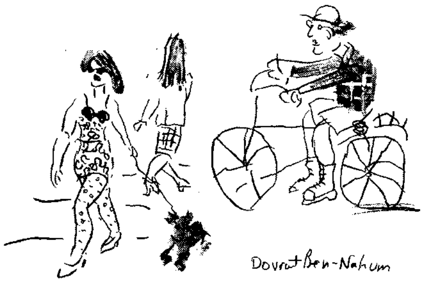
During this time, Steven Spielberg commiserated with Ross. "It made him so unhappy, the bad P.R. in the last couple of years," Spielberg recently recalled. "I had a similar experience—people don't see my movies, they see my success, they think of how much money I make. He used to say that people don't understand. They want to knock the statue off the pedestal. They want to kill Steve Ross and *be* Steve Ross."

Ever since Ross underwent surgery for prostate cancer in 1985, he had had periodic blood tests, and in the summer of 1991 there had been a suspicious elevation; he had, however, maintained his arduous schedule. In the fall, he'd flown to Japan for a meeting with Toshiba, then back to Long Island for Spielberg's wedding, and then to Paris to continue the Toshiba negotiations. In late October, with the Toshiba deal finally in place—but that only one piece of the puzzle—he was forced to take to his bed, suffering severe back pain. And when he learned, several weeks later, that his cancer had recurred, and that there was nothing much to be done, he is said to have remarked, in effect, "What a time for this to happen."

As chairman and co-C.E.O. of a public company, Ross, of course, had a responsibility to disclose the gravity of his condition. But he dealt with the issue of his mortality as he had dealt with other sticky problems in his business life: he preserved his deniability. His doctors at Memorial Sloan-Kettering decided on a regimen of radiation and chemotherapy, but even if it should be successful it was expected to grant him only six months, perhaps a year. Family members were given this prognosis, but Ross, who must have grasped his situation, is said never to have asked the direct question of his doctors at Memorial. In any event, on November 26th he put out a two-sentence press release, which said that he was beginning therapy for prostatic cancer: "My physicians are optimistic, and I am maintaining my normal work schedule."

One family member commented later on the consistently positive message that continued to be put forth over the coming months, "It wasn't true, but, after all, he wasn't the President of the United States." Such relativism, however, only serves to obscure the issue, which was Ross's accountability. For many years, he had behaved not as an employee of a company owned by public shareholders to whom he was accountable but, rather, as though that company were his private fiefdom; and he continued to do so in this instance. There was concern at Time Warner about incurring S.E.C. liability under full-disclosure regulations, particularly as the months wore on and suspicions about his deterioration grew. Nicholas, his co-C.E.O., and Levin, his chief operating officer, among others, knew that the cancer was a recurrence; that, given that fact and Ross's age, it was probably hopeless; and that this was said to be his doctors' view. Liman, for his part—despite his reportedly knowing the prognosis—seemed to give upbeat reports on Ross's progress to virtually everyone he encountered, including Time Warner directors.

Furthermore, something no less critical than the question of who would lead the company into the future was decided on the basis of this misrepresentation. Nicholas, whom Ross had agreed, contractually, would succeed him as sole C.E.O. of Time Warner five years after the merger, was fired in February of 1992. Ross had accomplished this unseating of Nicholas with the aid of Nicholas's former cohort, Levin, who took his place as co-C.E.O. And, prior to the directors' voting to fire Nicholas, Ross had explicitly assured them that he expected to be back in the spring; they were thus led to believe (if they believed Ross) that they were choosing, in effect, not between Nicholas and Levin but between Nicholas and Ross. Had they known the truth, they might still have chosen Levin, but certainly the choice would have been harder, and there would have been more debate; and, in any event, they ought not to have made so momentous a decision on a false assumption.



As Ross underwent intensive chemotherapy, his family gathered around him. There had been years of relative disconnectedness between him and Mark and Toni Ross, both of whom had suffered from being given only sporadic bursts of attention from him as they were growing up. "I had a Warner brother," Mark Ross said, and, speaking of his father, he added, "There was no balance in his life. There were times when it was hard to distinguish between family members and associates." Toni Ross said, "My father was very intense. When he was present, he was very present. But then he was absent—I felt there was a tremendous absence. We *were* close, but I didn't realize it for a long time. As I was growing up, it was very hard. I would think, Why do I have to share my father with all these people? There were all these people who felt that he was *their* father—but he was *my* father. I didn't understand why there had to be all these other people—and for a long time I felt that there was less, even, for us than for others." Before his cancer recurred, however, she had finally achieved a sense of resolution; she accepted that he was who he was, and realized that she adored him.

While Mark and Toni Ross's relations with their father had improved even before he became ill, they had had little relationship with their stepmother Courtney for years. Ross's marriage, moreover, was widely considered an unhappy one, long before it became known that Courtney, in September of 1991, was departing on a yearlong trip around the world, and taking Nicole, then eight years old, along. When I interviewed Ross in the fall of 1991, he was putting the best face on this trip; he volunteered, rather too hurriedly, that it was a great opportunity for Nicole, and that he would be travelling to meet them at various junctures. (He did, in fact, meet them in Tokyo shortly thereafter, and, according to an item in *Newsday*, they checked into the posh Hotel Seiyo Ginza with more than two hundred pieces of luggage.) Friends of Ross's maintained, however, that Courtney's trip was a de-facto separation.

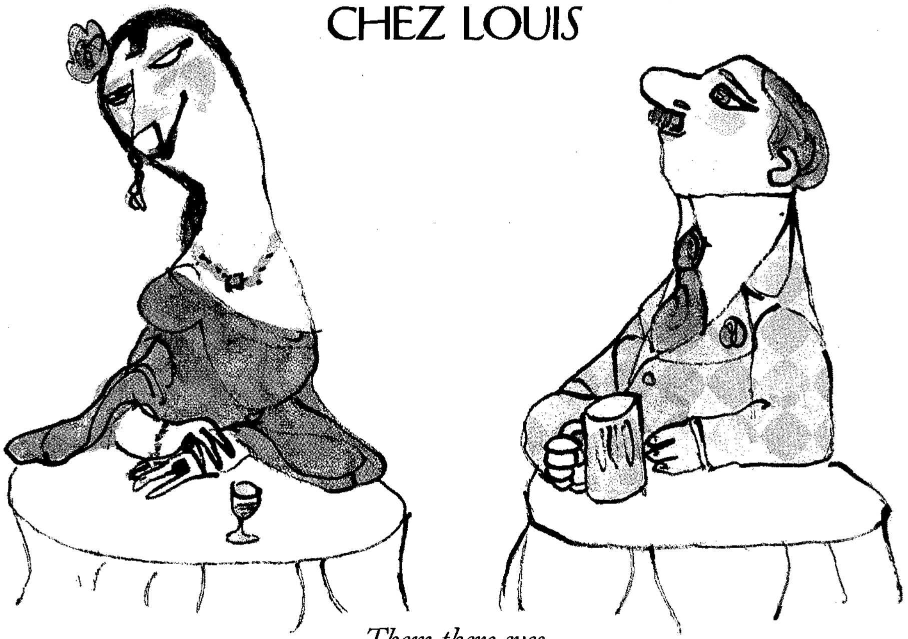
Among the legions of Steve Ross's

fans and friends, it was difficult to find any constituency for Courtney Ross. It seemed that what so many had earlier experienced as the Ross magic had begun to falter not only in his professional life (as with Lescure and Rousselet, and all the others who had spurned his advances for a "strategic alliance") but also, more fundamentally, in Ross himself. Some Ross loyalists felt that he had changed over the past decade, growing more venal, celebrity-oriented, imperial, isolated, and outrageous in his excesses. And they tended, rightly or not, to put a good deal of the blame on Courtney, who had been with him through those years. (She and Ross had dated in the mid-seventies, after Ross's separation from his first wife—Courtney had even worked at a division of Warner, Jungle Habitat—but Ross had dropped her, most unceremoniously, when he met Amanda Burden. Then, in 1981, when Burden left him, he had resumed his affair with Courtney, and married her in late 1982.)

In truth, Ross and his wife were so well matched in their love of luxury that it is difficult to distinguish the influence of one on the other; and it is probably true, too, that the cupidity of each only potentiated that of the other. It would be difficult to assert, for example, that buying a castle—Olmeta, in Todi, Italy, which was not a single building, actually, but an entire peasant village, plus two hundred and forty surrounding acres—was something that Courtney wanted but Ross did not; he, too, had grown fond of Italy, and he told me that he wanted Nicole to become bilingual. Courtney Ross, for her part, explained the allure of this particular rustic locale to a *Wall Street Journal* reporter by saying, "What my husband and I found so charming about it is that, as he"—their architect—"put it, it's so poor."

And an extravaganza that Courtney organized in connection with a concert Paul Simon gave in Montauk in August of 1992 would probably have been no different if Ross, who was ill, had been participating in it fully. The Rosses invited about forty guests to set out for the concert from their house in East Hampton—which Courtney had renamed Cody House, after her childhood nickname—and have dinner afterward. For a pre-concert snack, two luxury buses were laden with caviar, turkey, and champagne, for the roughly fifteen-mile ride

CHEZ LOUIS



Them there eyes

Gratuitous look of hostility

to Montauk. On the children's seats were sleeping bags with their names inscribed, and on the adults' were gifts from Hermès.

Certain flourishes, however, did seem to carry Courtney's stamp. After Spielberg, David Geffen, Jones, and Michael Jackson spent a weekend in East Hampton with the Rosses in 1985, Courtney sent each guest a memento: a five-volume set of hand-painted books, each an original edition—with photographs of the weekend and, as an accompanying text, written in elegant calligraphy, a fairy tale that featured a duke, a prince, and a king. The Rosses' Christmas card each year was, of course, oversized; its cover was a drawing by Nicole, and inside was a message written by Nicole about her family's contributions to poor families in East Hampton. Courtney was fond of animals; in addition to King Charles spaniels, the family pets included a miniature pony, a goat, a burro, and, more recently, a llama.

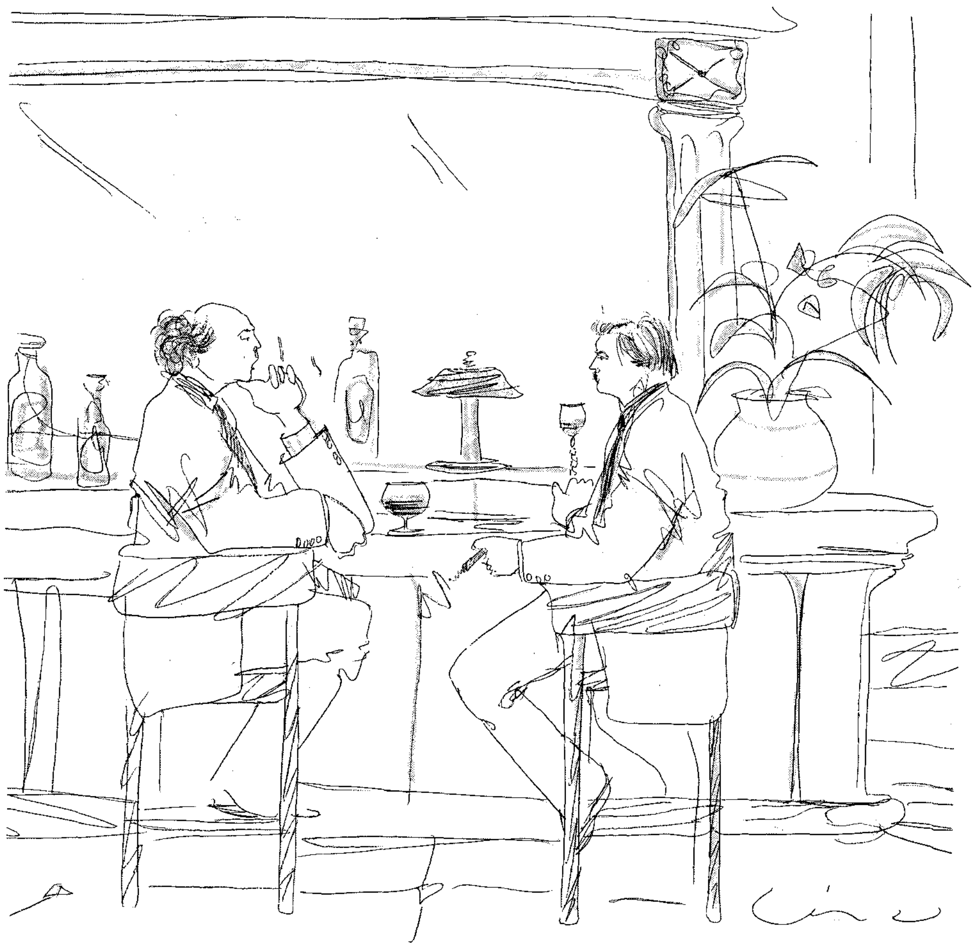
Then, there was a school that Courtney started a couple of years ago. It was said to consist of a handful of girls Nicole's age, and its premise seemed to be that the world was their classroom. Thus, if they were studying archeology, they would go to Egypt on a dig; if they were studying Chinese culture, they would go to China. Earlier this year, they went to Paris to view the Egyptian artifacts on display at the Louvre, in preparation for a planned trip to Egypt. On that trip to Paris, according to several people, they chartered a private jet and stayed at the Ritz, occupying an entire floor—a dormitory, as it were.

While there was an effort to remember, in the midst of all this opulence, that the world is a variegated place (the reference to the poor in the Christmas card, the inclusion of at least one black child in the school), the effect was nevertheless to create a realm so insular, so privileged, and so rarefied as to be, perhaps, unique. *That* would have pleased Ross, who had always striven for the singular. But it is difficult to believe that someone as astute as he did not realize that something here had gone terribly awry.

Courtney Ross and her entourage were in Hong Kong when, in November of 1991, she learned of Ross's diagnosis, and she returned immediately. From that time on, she took charge of Ross's life. She coördinated his medical care—pressing his doctors to do more, refusing to give up, seeking advice from other parts of the world, bringing in doctors from China. She, with Carmen Ferragano, who remained always at his side, controlled access to him. And she continued to maintain, publicly, that he was improving.

She may well have done this because she knew that it was what Ross wanted, and also because she believed that in fostering a widespread illusion she was preserving some degree of hope for him. However, it was true, too, that in doing it she was preserving Ross's power within the company as long as possible. And during this time she was attempting to consolidate some power of her own at the company. She wanted to become Time Warner's representative in China—an agent of sorts, receiving a commission on all Time Warner products sold in that country. According to one Time Warner executive, she brought her lawyer, Bertram Fields, to a meeting with Gerald Levin—something that is said to have irritated Levin, who was holding the meeting as a courtesy and was not prepared for a negotiating session. One longtime adviser to the company remarked, "What Courtney was proposing was unthinkable, even for *this* board." She is said, too, to have expressed interest in becoming a director of Time Warner.

However intent Ross had been on creating a life imbued with elements of fantasy, and however sovereign his style had become, he had not evinced hauteur, not treated people in menial positions as though they were lesser creatures. In this sense, at least, he never became grandiose: he allowed people their dignity; he remembered who he was. And whatever he did was so animated with warmth and originality that people who knew him well tended either to admire his excesses or to forgive them—not to recoil from them.

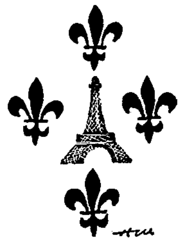


"I'm at that age where I'm offered women."

In the past, Courtney Ross had treated working people in a high-handed, overdemanding way, but Ross had always been there to smooth hurt feelings. Now, however, on the hundred-and-seventy-two-foot yacht Papa's Place, which they chartered for the summer, Ross was ill, and Courtney was more in command. (When Ross chartered a yacht, at least part of the expense was borne by Time Warner, one former Ross associate said; if stars, or studio or record executives, visited, some of the cost was said to be charged to the appropriate division's overhead.) According to several people who were on board, relations with the ship's crew got off to a rocky start when Courtney, who had had new sheets specially made for all the ship's beds before she embarked, ordered certain changes in the ship's interior—starting with removing paintings from the walls, including those which were permanently affixed. After complying with some of her demands, the captain finally balked—which enraged Courtney. One crew member commented, "People don't generally expect to redecorate a ship when they don't own it."

The Rosses brought their own sizable house staff, for which there was insufficient accommodation, on board—something that was unusual, too, and that led to further tensions. Their imperious majordomo—someone who, according to one person, "had a flair for making the staff members' lives miserable"—soon won the enmity of the ship's crew as well. The crew was told not to address Courtney Ross; any questions for her were to be related to the majordomo, who is said to have transcribed them onto cards and brought them to Courtney on a silver tray. She requested that when her daughter, Nicole, was served, only Baccarat crystal be used. According to someone who was on the boat, when Courtney, whose parents had owned a Coca-Cola bottling franchise, discovered that there was Pepsi on board she ordered that all the Pepsi be removed from the ship. The crew was further alienated when they received their tips after the first month, which were much less than they were accustomed to (proof of the fact that Ross, the peerless soft touch, was not the person in charge); several of them quit.

WHEN Ross was very ill during his hospital stays, the only one he saw, of all the stars who had made up his social circle over the last decade, was Spielberg. He was, in fact, the only non-family person, apart from Ferragano, who was with Ross during those periods. To a degree, Spielberg had taken over the role of Jay Emmett as "best friend"; however, because of the difference in age, Ross's relationship with Spielberg was more that of a father with a son. Spielberg often characterized their relationship that way—which may have incited certain proprietary emotions in Ross's children. It also raised the question of where, in this picture, Spielberg's own father fit. When, earlier this year, I asked Spielberg whether his father was alive, he said, "Yes. And I was very conflicted. Because Steve was very much what I wish my father was." Spielberg's father is an electrical engineer, who was once quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* as saying of his son's movies, "I didn't care for 'Indiana Jones' and I hated '1941.' When I told him, he said, 'Don't talk to me, Dad.' " Spielberg added, "Steve was very parental. He probably parented us more than he did his own kids."

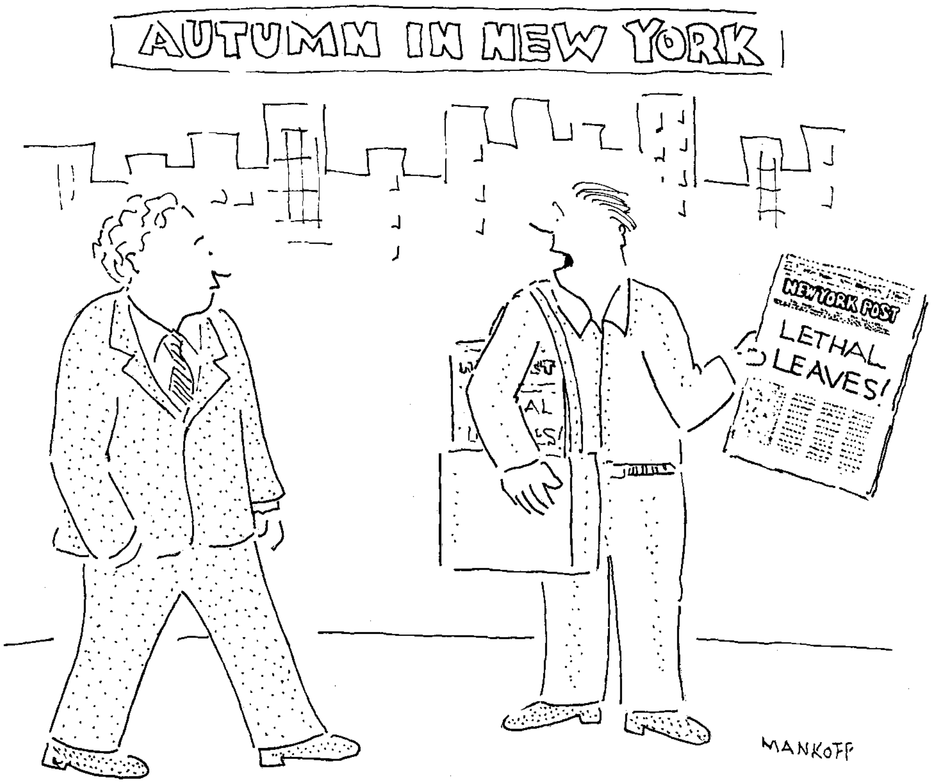


Spielberg, like many before him, basked in the glow of Ross's attention, thrived on it, came to depend on it and to find life more vivid in his presence. All that set Spielberg apart from his predecessors was that he got more of Ross's attention, over a longer period, than most did. Of the time before Ross became ill, Spielberg recalled, "We spent months sitting in his back yard under the sun. I'd be reading scripts, he'd be on the phone talking to Ed Aboodi, or scribbling on a yellow pad. Sometimes I'd be talking to him about where to go to dinner, and I could see he'd be lost. He'd be structuring something, running numbers in his head—he'd drift. He'd try to pay attention, but instead of looking into my eyes he'd be looking at my left ear. I'd know he was someplace else. But whenever I was talking about things important to me, of a personal nature, he'd *focus*. He'd put the pad down, hold his hand up to the houseman, Jerry, to signal no phone calls, and look at me intensely. He'd be *into* what I was telling him about my personal problems. The phone messages would pile up. We would talk for hours. I completely opened my life to him. I never had, to anyone, before—not to my parents, not to my siblings, not to my girlfriend. And not to a psychiatrist—I didn't have one."

Ross, however, had not similarly confided in him. "He never told me his feelings about his kids, about Courtney," Spielberg said. "He got more from giving than getting. The way actors give every last drop to the public, Steve in that sense wrung himself dry. He was a *giver*. It was the first time I really had someone in my life who cared about me, as opposed to what I could do for them." And on this point—that Ross had had no agenda in their friendship—Spielberg was adamant. As proof, he pointed to the fact that Ross had never asked him to do anything at Warner Brothers, even during an extended period when he was not engaged in any project there.

Like Ross, he had always been "a workaholic," he continued. Ross played as hard as he worked, of course; and that was what had initially drawn Spielberg and so many others to him—a style that bespoke a talent or, more, an insatiable appetite for life. But that was what Ross was—appetitive, at work or play, and never fulfilled. Ross, in any event, had pushed Spielberg to pause and take satisfaction in a completed work, to enjoy more of life's day-to-day pleasures, to open himself to friendship, to become a father. "Steve didn't practice what he preached," Spielberg acknowledged. "He never looked back, or even looked into himself. But he would always encourage me to take more pleasure, and *not* to style my life that way."

Spielberg said he had tried hard to find ways that he could "give back" to Ross. It was not easy. He had rented a house in the Virgin Islands and had tried to entertain him, Ross-style, but Ross had taken over the daily itinerary—deep-sea diving here, dinner there. ("It gave him happiness to be in control of the pleasure cruise.") And, once Ross was ill, Spielberg had been "part of his rehabilitation," he continued. "I said, 'You've got one thing on your side. You've got luck'—he was the luckiest man I've ever known. 'You've got to think of your own body as a deal. You can't realize your dreams until your health is better. You have to work as hard on yourself as on Time Warner, or on the T.W.E. deal with Toshiba, and then you'll get well. You owe this to Courtney and Nicole and Toni and Mark and to me.' " They had spent a lot of time, Spielberg continued, talking about what they would do when Ross got better: they would buy a yacht together (this was Ross's solution to the insubordinate crew, and they did in fact



"Read all about it! Falling leaves kill six!"

• •

make plans to buy one for about eleven million dollars); and Ross would spend more time with his children.

During his illness, Ross had "some crashingly low moments," Spielberg remarked; but the task he set himself was to get Ross to smile. "I got him to smile almost every time I saw him—and I'm not a funny guy. One time he had just come out of a chemo session, he was not feeling well at all, sitting all bundled up on the deck. I was fishing, and it reminded Steve of when I had been fishing a year earlier. The captain had been standing behind me. I'd cast—and hooked his leg! The hook went right into his thigh. Steve had been *apoplectic* with laughter. He'd laughed for an hour and a half. So now, as I was starting to cast, I heard this laughter—Steve was pointing at me and at the hook—and gesturing to people to back off. I thought, Thank God I hooked the captain a year ago."

Spielberg was happy to be the source of Ross's amusement, through his awkwardness, and also through his credulity. "He loved to play practical jokes on me; I fell for it every time. He used to say, 'How could someone so successful be so gullible?' Steve *never* fell for it—you couldn't put anything over on him."

During his illness, Ross continued to be the irrepressible prankster he'd been all his life. Spielberg recalled visiting him in the hospital in Southampton, where Ross was receiving a transfusion. "I was trying to get him to smile. I told him I'd read that three people had died from eating Louisiana oysters and I had had oysters for lunch—how did I know they were Long Island or Louisiana oysters? He shrugged, as if to say, 'You never know.' The doctor came in to examine him, and Courtney and I went out. All of a sudden, the doctor came rushing out. I said, 'What's the matter?' He said, 'We've got sixty people in the hospital who ate oysters earlier today—a whole floor of critically ill people.' I thought, That's it! And then I heard Steve laughing."

With Ross, the setups never stopped. They had always run the gamut from the wholly benign to the most Machiavellian: some he had contrived for the sheer fun of it, some to make himself more interesting or accomplished in others' eyes, some in deadly earnest, to achieve a business goal. And sometimes, in all this tireless orchestrating, there was an overlap. Ross had a habit of telling people that he had played for the Cleveland Browns; this had apparently started as an outright joke and then perhaps become a bit of a prank (he said it in front of the credulous, while rolling his eyes at a knowing friend), but ultimately it was something he fully adopted. His daughter Toni said, "I grew up believing that my father played tight end for the Cleveland Browns, that he broke his arm playing and he had to give it up." He had told her that there had been some small articles about him but he had destroyed them, because he'd loved it so and then he couldn't play anymore. When she learned, much later, that the story wasn't true, she said, she had not discussed it with him, because "he would have been embarrassed." She added that she thought "people made too much of that—as though it meant that everything was a lie."

Generally, those setups that Ross didn't want discovered weren't. In the summer of 1989, when Dustin Hoffman was performing "The Merchant of Venice" in London, Ross had flown over to see the play and chartered the Klementine, his favorite yacht; Hoffman and his family joined Ross onboard. He and Ross were sitting on deck on a Sunday morning, Hoffman recalled, and he himself was laboring over the London *Times* crossword puzzle. Suddenly, Ross—with a small, giveaway grin—said, in the kidding way that he generally had with Hoffman, "What word are you having trouble with?"

Hoffman passed the puzzle over to him—thinking, however, that Ross, while a numbers wizard, was no wordsmith, and that his interest was surprising. In ten or fifteen minutes, Ross had completed most, if not all, of the puzzle. Hoffman was slack-jawed and, years later, was still bewildered by it. How Ross performed this feat remains a mystery; but that he could not have done [illegible] without machination seems almost certain. He is said to have been so handicapped by being a poor speller that he was frustrated even by commonplace crossword puzzles—let alone the puzzles in the London Sunday *Times*.

Hoffman had received the full measure of the Ross treatment. "He called, and said, 'Listen, I've chartered this boat, and Courtney and I can't use it for two weeks, it's in the Mediterranean, the captain will take you wherever you want to go—do you think you could use it?' " Hoffman recalled. "It was a hundred-and-sixty-foot yacht, with ten in crew. We invited Barry Levinson. It was the *best* vacation we ever had."

Once, when Hoffman called Ross to ask his help in raising money for a young woman who needed a bone-marrow transplant, Ross had contributed a million dollars (it is unclear whether it was from the company or from Ross personally), and had also called a meeting, at his office, of people he considered potential contributors. "One pledged twenty-five thousand dollars, another fifty thousand—these were multimillionaires!—and then, from some of them, the money never came. Only when you try to raise money from the rich do you realize how difficult it is," Hoffman said. "*Nobody* gave like Steve Ross."

Much as Ross had tried to draw Hoffman into his inner circle of stars, however, Hoffman did not become smitten in the way that others did; he did not feel that Ross and he were close, and, indeed, did not see Ross once he became ill. There had been one or two occasions over the years when Hoffman thought that Ross had let his guard down, but mainly Ross had been, for all his charm, inaccessible. Hoffman was quick to point out, however, that Ross did have qualities he liked. "I never saw him hurt anybody. I never saw him mean. I never saw him unkind. If I were playing him—" Hoffman broke off, and then continued, "This was a man who never *sat* in a chair, but the chair was like the starter's block for a runner: 'Can I get you anything, let me get you—' And I think it was genuine. If he had not become so successful, this monolith, I can see him with the guys—he was a man's man, I guess they call it—in a working-class bar, and he's saying, 'I'll get it, I'll get it! Charlie, what do you want, I'm getting it!' He could have been a maître d'. He'd be kind to the help, the one who always had his eye on the tables to make sure everything was just right, who if something broke would be there, cleaning it up himself. If he was anything, he was that. There was a magnet in him, that way. He was anticipatory." Hoffman paused, then continued, "The critics would say that it was all for a purpose—and it may be that it came to be used that way. But I think that he started out like that. I don't see him being so different, if he had not become successful. He would still have been that way—and he would still have been ill at ease in life." Referring to the tumult with which Ross surrounded himself, he added, "I never saw him in repose."

On September 17, 1992, Ross turned sixty-five. Finding a great gift for Ross was no mean challenge: he was an avid and tireless consumer, and there was little he spared himself. Spielberg, who, of course, received wonderful presents from Ross, and who had struggled through many a Christmas and Ross birthday, felt he had succeeded this time.

Handelsman

"If I have to ask permission for every bite, dearest, we'll be mating all day."

He bought Ross a turn-of-the-century Victrola, and Ross loved it. "I was finally able to give him something that he was *effusive* about," Spielberg recalled. He also made a film for Ross, based on Ross's all-time favorite, "It's a Wonderful Life."

Just as James Stewart's George Bailey, so overcome with despair that he is about to throw himself off a bridge, is shown by an angel what the world would have been like if he had not lived, so Spielberg set out to show the world as it would have been if Ross had not lived. "I dreamed this up when we were in Hawaii, filming 'Jurassic Park,' " Spielberg said. "We had Bob Daly and Terry Semel as hoboes, looking for food in trash cans. Clint Eastwood, instead of being the legend, was a stuntman, an extra—Joel Silver shoots him, and actually kills him. Quincy was Clarence, the angel. Chevy Chase was God. I was in a mental institution, totally enclosed in a straitjacket, just my fingers free and—like the mountain in 'Close Encounters'—I was putting together in shaving foam the face of E.T. and not quite knowing what I was trying to express. I said, 'He came to me . . . he came to me . . . he was a six-foot-three E.T.!' "

In late October, Ross travelled to Los Angeles to undergo surgery. It was performed by Dr. Donald Skinner, at U.S.C.'s Kenneth J. Norris, Jr., Cancer Hospital. His doctors at Memorial Sloan-Kettering had warned that the operation was futile, family members said, but Dr. Skinner was holding out the possibility of long-term survival, with a good quality of life, and Ross's other doctors had virtually nothing left to offer. Besides, it appeared to his family that he was dying—he had not been able to eat or drink in months—and they felt, as did he, that this was, at least, a chance.

After ten and a half hours of radical surgery, Dr. Skinner proclaimed the operation a success. He told

GOD'S SUBCONTRACTORS
WATER GUY
I can install an ocean right here. Piece of cake.
TREE-AND-PLANT PERSON
I'll put in a couple of million maples, some elms, whatever. Two, three hours MAX.
ANIMAL MAN
You want animals? NO PROBLEMO.

Ross's family that he had been able to remove the tumor, and that some remaining lymph nodes could be treated with chemotherapy once Ross had regained his strength. It seemed almost a miracle. For the first time since Ross's cancer had been diagnosed as having returned, a year earlier, the optimistic reports that the family made public were ones that they themselves could believe.

Before Ross left for California in October, Hugh Culverhouse, a Time Warner director, had come to see him to discuss reducing the size of the company's board. With the merger, the two twelve-member boards had combined. In the fall of 1991, Nicholas, then Ross's co-C.E.O., had begun talking to Gerald Levin, who had recently been designated chief operating officer, about the need to reduce the size of the board and also the number of insiders. After Nicholas was fired, in February of 1992, and Levin was promoted to the co-C.E.O. post, the issue had continued to percolate.

The giant California Public Employees Retirement System pension fund (Calpers), which is a vocal Time Warner shareholder, had warned that if no action was taken it would file a shareholder proposal for a bylaw amendment, to be voted on at the next Time Warner annual meeting—which would require the elimination of most of the insiders. Moreover, a succession of controversial episodes—including the coercive rights offering and the firing of Nicholas—had not augmented the board's reputation for judgment, integrity, or deftness; and there was a general recognition, even among the board members, that they needed some new outside directors to lend stature to it.

Another embarrassment had been the June, 1992, board meeting, which Levin chaired alone (Ross was too ill to attend) and at which police officers demonstrated against the inclusion of Ice-T's song "Cop Killer" on a Sire/Warner Brothers album. Levin had written a *Wall Street Journal* Op-Ed article defending Time Warner's support of the song on First Amendment grounds—an argument that was specious, since judgments about what to publish, record, or film are made constantly at Time Warner and other companies, and a negative decision cannot be equated with censorship. Ross was said to have been unhappy with Levin's handling of the issue, and to have thought that it was wrong to put the company on the line by raising the dispute to such a broad issue of principle, as Levin's article did; that, rather, Levin should have found a way to push the issue down to the divisional level. In any case, the company has since dropped its association with Ice-T.

In September, 1992, Levin had assigned Culverhouse and Dick Munro to explore the issue of reducing the board, and to make recommendations. An associate of Levin's explained that in choosing Culverhouse, from the W.C.I. side, and Munro, from Time Inc., "Jerry was looking for people who had symbolic value in the company."

While it was true that Munro had been Time Inc.'s chairman and C.E.O. (albeit a hapless one), he was an odd choice, in that he himself could be considered an insider. In addition to his former role at the company, he was chairman of the executive committee, a position that provided him compensation of a million dollars in 1992. In only one respect, however, was he a perfect choice: he was the person on the board to whom Levin was closest, and upon whom Levin could rely to take direction.

Munro had always been somewhat awed by Levin—who had come to be known as the "resident genius" at Time Inc. after he pushed the company to gamble seven and a half million dollars on leasing satellite time to transmit HBO's signal to cable systems, in the mid-seventies—and was dazzled, especially, by Levin's powers of expression. (Levin's language was often ornate, his manner oracular.) Nevertheless, when it came time, in the late eighties, for Munro to choose his successor, he had selected not Levin but the executive with whom Levin had been competing for years, who had a far better track record: Nicholas.

Nicholas, for his part, instead of dispatching Levin, as supporters advocated, had decided that they would make a strong team; had come to rely on him; and, in the merger negotiations, had exacted a private promise from Ross that within a year Levin would be clearly designated the company's No. 3. That way, Nicholas thought, if ever there were a power struggle between him and Ross, it would be two against one at the top.

Ross, who had sized up both

Nicholas's flintiness and Levin's complaisance, assented. Events took their course: Nicholas challenged Ross on his strategic alliances, while Levin became only more obsequious toward Ross and also solidified his bond with Ross's closest adviser, Oded Aboodi; and, ultimately, Levin operated as Ross's agent in the ambush of Nicholas—who had had no inkling of Levin's betrayal or of any plot, and received the coup de grâce when he was away on a week's vacation. As the firing of Nicholas was about to unfold, Levin had gone to Munro to obtain his blessing. If Munro had dissented, and rallied other board members from the Time Inc. side—or even demanded a full board discussion, with Nicholas present—its execution would have been far more difficult. Munro, however, had simply acquiesced; he and Levin had become confederates.

Munro's counterpart, Culverhouse, had been a relative latecomer to the W.C.I. board, and if he had had any "symbolic value" there it was for his opportunism. He had joined the board in the mid-eighties as one of Herbert Siegel's Chris-Craft directors; Ross had courted him; and ultimately—in the ongoing battles between Ross and Siegel—he had sided with Ross. Ross had rewarded him with a seat on the Time Warner board. Ross, naturally, was wise enough to know that anyone who has betrayed once may well do so again. A friend of Ross's recalled that sometime in the last couple of years someone had remarked to Ross, "Culverhouse is a snake," and Ross had replied, "Yes, but he's *our* snake," and added, "But don't fall asleep in the grass." Why Ross didn't heed his own warning is not clear. But, of course, he was very ill; besides, he could not have imagined that any action would be taken without his blessing. A Levin associate, describing what he understood to have happened when Culverhouse met with Ross, said, "Steve is said to have made general comments on how he understood that the board had to be downsized and some insiders had to go. But he may well have also said, 'Let's wait until I get back.' "

In early December, Munro and Culverhouse met with Dale Hanson, the C.E.O. of Calpers. Hanson had already made Calpers' position plain: if there were no board changes by the end of the year, Calpers would be filing its proposal for a bylaw amendment. That deadline, however, hardly had the force of an ultimatum; if changes were made after the end of the year but before the next annual meeting, the proposal would simply be moot. Hanson said of their meeting, "We had an indication of where they were going, but we didn't go 'yea' and 'nay' on individual directors. Munro raised the question of whether we thought he should continue as an insider. I said, 'You've got to have a carryover from *Time* magazine.' While they didn't say *exactly* when, we knew that the change was coming in the very, very near future."

That, however, was a well-kept secret. As had been true in the firing of Nicholas, a premium was placed on timing and surprise. And, like Nicholas, the targeted directors were stunned, on the Monday of the last week before the Christmas holidays, when Munro and Culverhouse began to place their calls. Also as in Nicholas's case, there was to be no full boardroom discussion; they were demanding the directors' immediate resignation. Even Allan Ecker and Deane Johnson, both of whom were longtime W.C.I. loyalists, and both of whom had announced in the fall that they intended to retire when their terms expired, in 1993, were asked for their resignations immediately.

In the coup against Nicholas, Levin had acted as Ross's agent, and Ross had remained aloof; now Munro played that part for Levin. According to a couple of people involved, Munro did it with toughness, not to say belligerence—lacing his speech with expletives as he encountered resistance from former W.C.I. directors. One person, who noted that Munro appeared to be enjoying his task, recalled that over the last year or so, when Ross was not around, Munro had remarked to other directors, "We *bought* this goddam company! And I've taken all this shit!" From Munro's standpoint, at least, this was the revenge of Time Inc.

From the Time side, the outside directors Michael Dingman and Matina Horner and *Time's* editor-in-chief, Jason McManus, had been chosen to resign. It was almost too richly ironic that Munro, who years earlier had made it his goal to remove the editor-in-chief from the board of Time Inc., should now finally succeed in doing so, and should justify retaining his own position on the board as, according to Hanson, the monitor of corporate governance—"the carryover from *Time* magazine."

From the W.C.I. side, directors whose resignations were demanded were, in addition to Johnson and Ecker, the insiders Martin Payson, vice-chairman of Time Warner, and Bert Wasserman, the longtime C.F.O. of W.C.I. and, now, Time Warner; and the outside directors William vanden Heuvel and Benjamin Holloway. For Payson, especially, it was a bitter comeuppance; he had feared that Nicholas would do this very thing to him, and he had lent Levin critical assistance in the execution of Nicholas. It was a rude break with the past for these directors, coming, as they did, from the Warner family, where directors, rather than leaving the board in their advanced years, often became directors emeriti, and where employees were, as a rule, not fired but shifted to other positions—in short, where safeguarding individuals' dignity was, generally, a company priority.

The process offended and angered nearly all the designated directors, including those on the Time side, and several agreed that if it had to be carried out so summarily by this "committee"—which was simply *acting*, without first returning to the board to air its conclusions, as most directors had expected—then its two members, Munro and Culverhouse, might at least have gained a measure of credibility if they had included themselves as resignees. The only directors sufficiently enraged to threaten a counterattack, however, were, predictably, those Ross loyalists who had felt their lives bound up in W.C.I.: Payson, Wasserman, and, to a lesser degree (as an outside director), vanden Heuvel.

In late November, the board had requested a letter from Ross's Los Angeles doctor stating his prognosis. That letter is reported to have stated that the operation had been a success; that Ross would be back in touch by mid-January; and that he would eventually be able to resume some level of participation, though never his full-time duties.

Since his surgery, Ross had been incommunicado; he saw only his family and Ferragano. Now Payson, Wasserman, and vanden Heuvel—supported by Liman, Ross's lawyer, who allied himself with them—demanded the obvious of Levin: Why couldn't the resignations wait a matter of weeks, until Ross could offer his view? Not that his view would

"I've spent the summer speaking out against violence."

be decisive, they said, but he should have the opportunity to be heard. Levin is said to have responded that the issue would be a terrible one with which to confront Ross, in his weakened condition.

It was not much of an answer, but Levin could not give what was surely the real answer: that it couldn't wait precisely because Ross might soon be back in touch, and then the plan would be stymied, or compromised—because this was the ideal moment. Levin may not have believed the sanguine long-term forecast of Ross's California doctor; he may have subscribed to the Memorial Sloan-Kettering view, that Ross's case was hopeless; but he had no reason not to believe, at least, that Ross's California doctor had succeeded in prolonging his survival. And as long as Ross lived—and still controlled the board—Levin's own future was not altogether secure.

That Ross had ever truly countenanced an heir apparent was something that Levin is said to have questioned. It was clear that Ross had, in effect, had his fingers crossed when he told Nicholas *he* was his chosen successor. Ross is said to have kissed Levin on the cheek and told him he loved him when he sent him to carry out the execution of Nicholas, but Levin had to wonder whether that meant that Ross had really accepted him not only as a member of the Warner family but as his successor—or were his fingers crossed again? Plainly, Ross preferred Levin to Nicholas, but what if Ross was merely using Levin to provide an essential interregnum? One could not *read* Ross; Levin could not know.

While this dilemma was a critical one for Levin, others, too, were pondering it. Through the latter part of 1992, there had been frequent press speculation that Levin was not sufficiently dynamic to lead an entertainment company like Time Warner, and that Ross might prefer to see his creation in the hands of Barry Diller, the former chairman of News Corporation's Fox, Inc., or Michael Ovitz, the chairman of Creative Artists Agency.

The reports achieved such currency that Diller wrote Levin a letter saying he did not want his job. Ovitz did not write. After a July 26th article in the Los Angeles *Times* quoted the Time Warner director Henry Luce III as saying that he didn't see how a talent agent would be equipped to run a giant company such as Time Warner, Ovitz, according to Luce, had paid him a visit. "He came to persuade me he was not just a talent agent," Luce said. Interestingly, John Calley, the former president of Warner Brothers, now president of United Artists, had urged Ross in 1980 or so to hire Ovitz as his No. 2, and the two men had talked, but nothing had materialized. In September, 1992, Ovitz requested a meeting with Ross, and flew to East Hampton to visit him; later, he refused to divulge what they had discussed.

Even if Ross was not musing about a stronger successor, and should die with Levin in place, Levin still could not feel completely secure with a board of directors which was mainly Ross's. If Levin were to stumble and a challenger were to appear, how faithful would those directors be to him? It was simple arithmetic. By late 1992, the board had twenty-one directors (a few had been lost through attrition)—twelve from W.C.I. and nine from Levin's Time.

But if Levin should succeed in reconstituting the board according to his design it would have six Time directors (including Levin) and six W.C.I. directors (including Ross); Levin would then add several new ones. Moreover, while there was an apparent equality in his design—six and six at present—when Ross died the majority would become Levin's, and even before Ross died it really *was* Levin's, because Culverhouse had already crossed over. As one of Levin's associates later observed, there was no other director on the W.C.I. side who would conceivably have participated in that action, at that time, in that way.

It is said that Liman, faced with Levin's implacability, talked to Courtney Ross and Carmen Ferragano about the possibility of broaching it with Ross. By Wednesday, December 16th, however, Ross began to suffer heart trouble, and also contracted pneumonia. It was impossible to discuss. Finally, in a meeting with Levin, Liman, it is said, berated him loudly, declaring that there was no reason not to wait.

In so doing, Liman was risking a great deal—not only his own continued representation of Time Warner but that of his firm, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, since Time Warner was its largest client. For Liman to have done something that others later termed "suicidal" was, however, not surprising. Liman was so devoted to Ross that he had always been willing to do virtually anything for him. In the past, it had involved sacrificing the interests of others; now, at this moment of extremity, it was his own interest that was involved. Levin is reported to have cut him short, demanding hotly, "Who is it you're representing, Arthur—Steve or the company?"

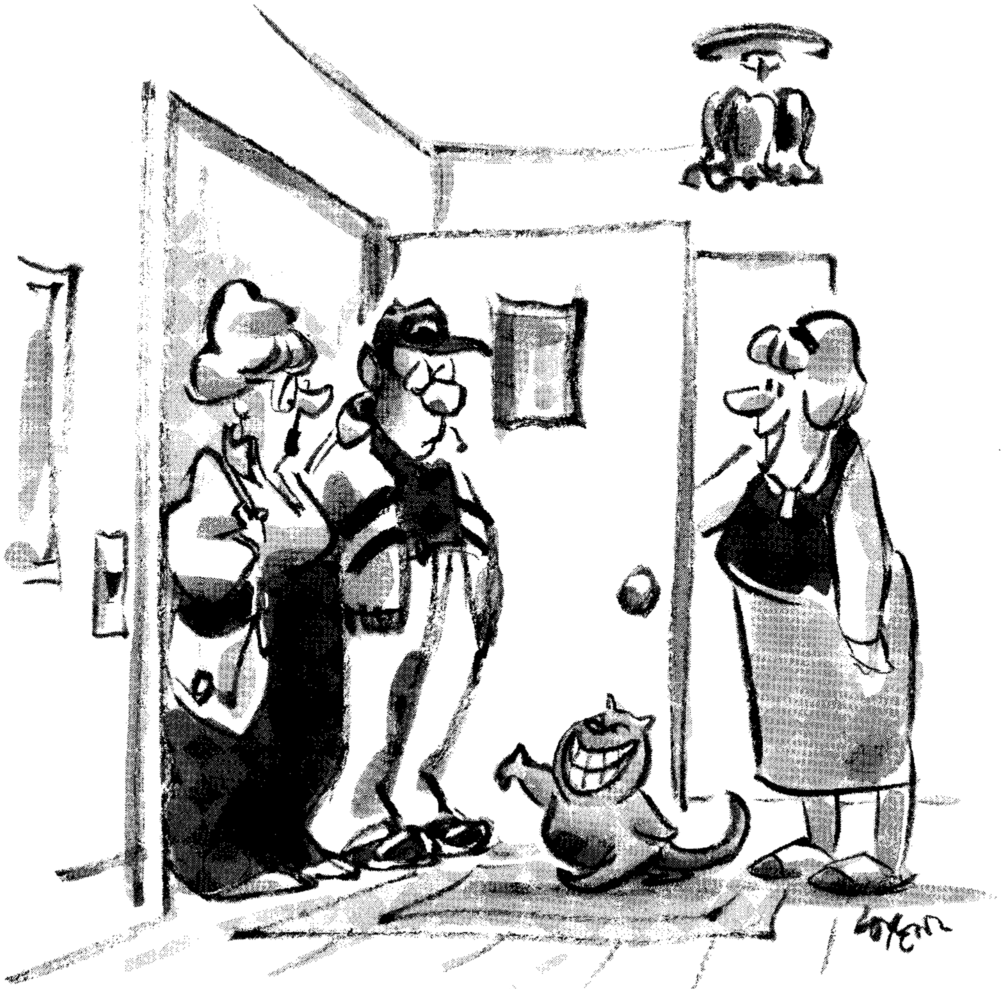
Levin recounted this exchange to several people; it was apparently a line he was proud of. The fact is, however, that it was a near-verbatim echo of what Nicholas had said, in *his* angry exchange with Ross's other arch-protector, Ed Aboodi (who, unlike Liman, remained docile vis-à-vis Levin during the current struggle). For his insubordination, Nicholas had been dispatched. Levin, by contrast, had been all humility until this moment, when the power was at last within his grasp—and then he, too, uttered these words. In Ross's kingdom, they had been incendiary and treasonous words: Steve *was* the company. By their utterance, Levin gave notice that the kingdom was now his.

On Friday, while the battle was raging in New York—and Payson, Wasserman, and vanden Heuvel were refusing to resign without Ross's being given a chance to express his views—Ross, very weak, was watching "The Godfather" and then "The Godfather Part II" with his son. Both Mark and Toni Ross had spent weeks in Ross's California hospital room after his operation; then, in mid-December, they had returned to New York. But when Ross worsened on that Wednesday, Mark had flown back out. By Saturday, however, he was told that his father was not in any danger, and that he should go home; Toni was planning to come on Sunday. There with Ross at that point were Courtney Ross, Nicole, and Carmen Ferragano.

Shortly after Mark arrived in New York in the early evening, however, he received a call saying that Ross's doctor had determined that something was amiss, and that he had to operate to see what the source of the trouble was. And late that evening Ross's doctor called and told Mark that he had done so; that the cancer was now everywhere; and that his recommendation was not to wake him up. A couple of hours later, Ross died. As the calls went out in the early hours of that Sunday morning, December 20th, friends were told that he had been operated on and died. One family member said, "Courtney felt that it was the right decision. I believe that it was, too. Although I also think it was one that Steve—if he had had to make it himself—could not have made."

He could not have, one guesses, because the Ross credo was that you never give up, you fight and *win*, against all odds. And those who believed in the living legend he created had continued over the past year to view him, at least in some inchoate way, as invincible, even as he receded before their eyes. Toni Ross said that when her father's death finally came it "stunned" her. She had listened to the doctors, had struggled with the hopeless prognosis, and had spent most days with Ross once he became ill. There were times when she seemed to accept, emotionally, that he was indeed dying; once, a friend recalled, she had begun to weep in a phone conversation, and had said that she knew she was never going to dance with her father again. Still, in the end she realized that acceptance had eluded her, and not because of unresolved anger, or things left unsaid, or needs unmet—the hard road, generally, that their earlier relationship had been. It was, rather, that the force of his persona overwhelmed everything her mind had processed. "I didn't believe my father could die," she said.

On the afternoon of Sunday, December 20th, the Time Warner board held a meeting by phone. The previous day, the board crisis had finally been resolved. Wasserman, who had declared his intransigence, backed down—deciding that he wanted more than anything else to keep his job as C.F.O. So he agreed to resign as a director before the 1993 annual meeting. Payson had



"Before Prozac, she __loathed__ company."

initially been given that option—of remaining in his position, as vice-chairman—but he had been so emotional and angry that he was told to quit or be fired. Now, without Wasserman as an ally, he decided it was time to give up the fight. So he resigned, after negotiating a settlement that was said to total roughly nine million dollars. Vanden Heuvel, having lost his troops, was still refusing to tender his resignation, but it was immaterial, because his term would expire before the next annual meeting and he would not be renominated.

All this had fallen into place for Levin before he or any of the others knew that Ross was about to die. But then Ross *had* died. And timing, which Levin had employed deftly both in the strike against Nicholas and in this one, suddenly turned and bit him. On the very day of Ross's death, Levin was forced to put out a press release headed, "Time Warner Reports Changes on Board of Directors."

However awkward the situation, it did not, incredibly, inhibit Levin from making one additional move to shore up his power. During the telephonic board meeting, the director Donald Perkins spoke up. (Several directors said later that they believed that he had planned the move along with Levin, Munro, and Culverhouse.) Now he told his fellow-directors that he had been informed by two company executives that a New York *Times* reporter, Geraldine Fabrikant, had asked whether Levin was going to be immediately named chairman, in Ross's place; and that she had also expressed the view that, if he wasn't, that inaction might be read by Wall Street as an expression of the board's lack of confidence in Levin. Therefore, Perkins was suggesting that they name Levin chairman.

At this, director Ray Troubh fairly shouted, "Steve has not been dead twelve hours!" He went on to say that he supported Levin, but that naming him chairman was something that should be done in due course. Were they suggesting in all seriousness that the company should make such a major move on the basis of a reporter's statement? The idea was put aside.

At the next board meeting, on January 21st, Levin was made chairman. He was thus chairman and C.E.O., and he was also retaining the title of president. In not deigning to name a No. 2, Levin was not so dissimilar from Ross, who had refused to do so throughout his reign at W.C.I. However, while no one had been more jealous of power than Ross, he had managed over three decades to wield it in a way that rarely left blood on the floor or made mortal enemies. He was able to do that largely because he was at the fulcrum of something that was of his own creation.

Not so Levin. He was a corporate manager who had made his own way up through the ranks. To reach this zenith, he had had to overcome Nicholas, and he had had to wrest control, in the end, from Ross and his allies. And these moves, for all his effort to cloak them—in Nicholas's case, in the garb of Time Inc., and, in Ross's case, in corporate governance—were naked graspings at power. One cannot claim a victory for corporate governance in a coup.

Levin had made it to this point by himself, and so he intended to remain. After the merger, he and Nicholas had moved over to 75 Rockefeller Plaza, to occupy newly designed offices on the twenty-ninth floor, with Ross. After Nicholas's firing, his office had been made into a conference room. Now Levin announced that Ross's office would be made into a new boardroom—and not, as some in the company had assumed, into several smaller offices. Thus, in a building cramped for space, Levin, the first chairman, C.E.O., and president of Time Warner, would occupy the twenty-ninth floor alone.

"*Police nudity? Ugh.*"

Ross's memorial service was held at Carnegie Hall on February 11, 1993. If there was any doubt that Ross had achieved international stature as one of the media barons of our age, this event was calculated to lay it to rest. Several thousand invitations had been sent out (their envelopes addressed in calligraphy), and the orchestra section and the first tier were filled. The mistress of ceremonies was Beverly Sills. The speakers were the Reverend Jesse Jackson; former Governor Hugh Carey; Mayor David Dinkins; Pelé, the Brazilian soccer player who made the Warner-owned Cosmos famous; the gossip columnist Liz Smith; Spielberg; Minoru Murofushi, from

Itochu; Levin and three other Time Warner executives; Liman; Mark and Toni Ross; and Caroline Lang, who, the program stated, was "speaking on behalf of her father Jack Lang, French Minister of Education and Culture."

Despite its meticulous orchestration and high-flown roster, the service was widely considered by Ross loyalists to have been a flop. It began at 11 A.M. and lasted nearly two and a half hours; after the first hour and a half, people began to drift out. Its fatal conceptual error was that instead of trying to reflect the man—something that, if it had been done well, could have held any crowd in thrall, let alone these masses of the faithful—it had strained to create an image of Ross as a historic world figure. Many in this audience said later that they felt the memorial to have been more reflective of Courtney—her grandiosity and her ambition—than of Steve Ross. "She wanted to be Jackie Kennedy," one concluded.

It was almost as though Courtney Ross had contracted from Ross (and gone on to reflect, in her own style) the sense of insecurity that had dogged him. It was unfortunate. There was no need to embellish or to try to augment Ross's stature, for the "achievements" side of the ledger of Ross's life demonstrated him to have been one of the most original entrepreneurs of his time.

His first twenty years in the business world were spent mainly in trial and error, but at the time he acquired Warner-Seven Arts he was beginning to come into his own. He had by then the earmarks of a consummate deal-maker. He was unusually farseeing: he recognized the potential of cable when few others did, and he was the only one among his peers in the movie business to do so. He saw software as a whole—movies, TV, music, and cable programming. And he also grasped early that it was the development of programming which would spur the growth of cable. He viewed the entertainment business as a global business, and he set up a global distribution network that was the strongest in his industry.

As Ross would be the first to say, he did not accomplish these things alone. He had a knack for finding good people. And with them he had the attributes of an excellent teacher: he supported and empowered his divisional people—he was not threatened by them but knew that if he gave them freedom they would do their best for him. He encouraged risk-taking—in fact, he made it his credo—but he did not do so blindly; for most of his years, his company grew on a sound, not a leveraged, financial base.

Ross had not really excelled until he was in a business about which he was passionate. Had he not acquired Warner–Seven Arts or some other entertainment company, it is unlikely that he would ever have come to the public's attention. He loved being associated with a creative enterprise, and much of what he did—the way he treated talent, and his operating heads, too—flowed from that. "Steve loved businesses that involved massaging human egos and he was extraordinarily good at it," Roger Smith, a former Warner executive, said.

Though the cable business was different (it was mainly a hardware business), Ross's enthusiasm for it, too, had an emotional source. He was a relentless, insatiable consumer, who liked having every imaginable service available to him at all times, so the idea of a universe of options just a button's press away held enormous appeal for him. For roughly twenty years, through setbacks and failures, the future possibilities of cable induced in him almost a froth of excitement.

There was much besides that was less salutary (particularly in the Westchester Premier Theatre and Atari episodes); but these were the essential traits that enabled Ross to build W.C.I. into the entertainment powerhouse it was at the moment it merged with Time Inc. History, however, will judge Ross, fairly or not, in large measure by the outcome of that merger. And whether it will ultimately be proved a success—given its mammoth, sixteen-billion-dollar debt burden and the internecine strife, rather than synergy, within some of its divisions—seems increasingly open to question, and Ross surely was aware of that at the time of his death. That he should have been so rudely halted, denied the chance to make his greatest undertaking come out right, must have been profoundly difficult, if not impossible, for him to accept.

Of all Ross's plans for the company at the time he became ill, the only visible one he was able to carry out, which had been in gestation for months, was the firing of Nicholas. The reasons for firing him remained after Ross knew that he was unlikely to survive long. Levin would not change the company's course in dealing with its debt, as Nicholas would have; instead, Levin would do Ross's bidding and continue to work with Aboodi on the strategic alliances Ross was so intent on. And in the event that Ross—long considered by family and friends the luckiest man alive—somehow made it back, Levin would presumably continue to be as subservient as he had always been.

That much is plain. But it is difficult

THE BOWL

She was like a bowl filled with liquid
pushing against the meniscus, up
to the brim, waiting
for something
to tip it over, let all it holds
flow freely,
for someone who knows
that, however rich and rare, unless
spilled out its contents must stagnate
decay and parch.
But the bowl sits so
well balanced, as if nothing less than
a cyclone could budge it,
and the other
grows doubtful, while the weather stubbornly
stays in the doldrums, unbearably calm . . .

—RUTH FAINLIGHT

to imagine that Ross, that almost clairvoyant judge of people, put Levin in Nicholas's place because he visualized Levin as a strong leader for his—Ross's—company after his death. Levin was turned inward; he was opaque; and he was small—not just in stature but in effectiveness. He might be well suited to brewing transactions with Aboodi, and, especially, to immersing himself in the intricacies of the technological future—as in the two-way electronic superhighway that Time Warner is developing, and in its two-and-a-half-billion-dollar deal with U S West, a regional Bell telephone company. But he was altogether unequipped for the task of relating to the executives of Time Warner, with all their disparate and sometimes adversarial agendas, in ways that would inspire trust, loyalty, and a passion to follow his lead.

Only a couple of months after Ross's death, Seagram's quietly began accumulating Time Warner stock, and eventually disclosed that its intent was to take its ownership up to fifteen per cent. While Seagram's presented the move as a friendly one, it had not alerted Time Warner to its purchases until they passed the obligatory five-per-cent mark—a silence that in itself suggested a move less than friendly. Moreover, the move was said to have been fuelled by the avid interest of Seagram's president, Edgar Bronfman, Jr., in becoming actively involved in the entertainment business—and, perhaps, in having his friend Michael Ovitz replace Levin as chairman and C.E.O. "I see your fine Medici hand at work here," one knowing friend wrote in a note to Ovitz. Soon after Seagram's ownership was disclosed, Levin began discussing possible anti-takeover provisions with his advisers.

That this threat of an eventual change in command would have displeased Ross is far from clear. He had so diligently promoted the ideology that the company he headed and he were inseparable—joined in a kind of fixed symbiosis ("Steve Ross *is* W.C.I.," Spielberg had once declared)—that it was difficult to imagine his really wanting anyone else to have Time Warner. Binding the company to him had always been his objective—more than insuring its continuation without him. Whereas company founders intent on building an entity to outlast them regard the selection and grooming of a successor as one of their most important goals, Ross took care for decades to *avoid* any true contenders—and may well, in his view, have continued to do that to the very last. Levin had a capacious mind and a fascination with technology, but, that said, his persona—or lack of one—made him a most implausible successor to Ross, almost certain to be dwarfed by Ross's shadow. Moreover, Ross's blessing of Levin was tentative and limited (with fingers crossed?)—for, had he fully blessed Levin, there would have been an orderly and seemly transition, and Levin would not have felt impelled to seize control as he ultimately did.

At the time of the merger, some people, speculating that the merger itself reflected Ross's coming to terms with his mortality, had referred to its succession provisions as his "living will." But when I mentioned this to Ross—who was so controlled that his countenance rarely divulged anything he didn't intend it to—he had started noticeably, and looked as though he'd been slapped. He forcefully denied that it was a "living will," and talked about how there was nothing like having a six-year-old to keep you going, and how he intended to be there for many years to come.

If he only had, Ross loyalists say, he, and he alone, might have made the unwieldy, fractious merger work. "Steve was the godfather," Ralph Peterson, of Warner Brothers, declared, and, alluding to a feud between the heads of Warner Brothers and of HBO which began at the time of the merger and has only gathered heat since, he added, "He would have brought Bob Daly and Michael Fuchs into a room together." Perhaps. In assessing the keys to his success, Ross tended to downplay the intricacies of his deal-making, informed by his mathematical wizardry. In what proved to be our final interview, in September of 1991, Ross had acknowledged that he could indeed multiply a three-digit number by another three-digit number in his head. "Numbers speak to me," he said. "But very little of this is about numbers. It's about people, really—realizing what they want."

He certainly excelled at that, I said. Whereupon he shot me a quick, faintly gimlet-eyed look and added, "And that's not *bad*."

Ross was intent on never being found out. Those who knew him well over many years, including family members, agreed that he rarely, if ever, let the impenetrable façade slip; that he was frightened by the prospect of exposure; that it was therefore easier for him to have relationships with legions of his extended "family"—which involved, on his part, a great deal of *doing* and the receipt of an enormous and enormously needed amount of approbation but little genuine emotional contact—than with his real family; and that he was truly intimate with no one. It was a central paradox of Ross's life that the man with thousands of friends had none.

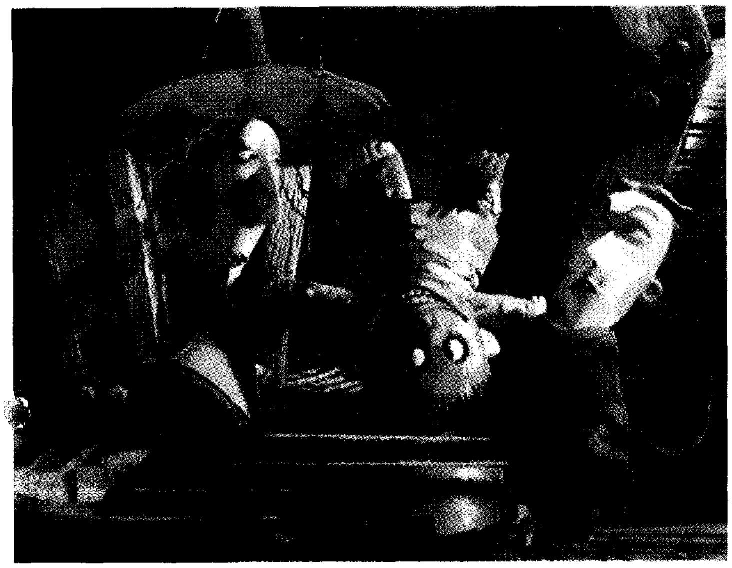
Many people wondered what the specific secrets were that Ross was so eager to protect. While there was an abundance of secrets as the years wore on, his guardedness was so much his emotional style that one suspected, more, that it might have come from a general discrepancy between the person he felt himself to be and the image he projected to the world. Whatever he did not want to reveal to others, it seemed he himself did not want to dwell on it, either: family members emphasized the fact that he simply could not be alone; there was then no distraction from himself, and, perhaps, no *sense* of himself, in the absence of others' responsiveness. His unease, in any event, was profound.

He was also someone who was continually creating and re-creating himself; it emerged that at the very start he had cast aside family connections, much as he later cast aside outworn sets of friends. Mark and Toni were amazed to discover after his death that he had had seven aunts and uncles whose existence he had never mentioned, even to their mother. When they questioned him about his family, he had always refused to discuss it. "I don't want to say my father 'abandoned' his family," Toni Ross said, "but it is certainly true that he disconnected himself from them."

The movies that Ross had loved so much when he was growing up, and watched so often in his later life, were redolent with old-fashioned values and virtues. "My father took me to see the John Wayne movie 'True Grit' when I was nine, and when I was twelve he took

SKETCHBOOK BY TIM BURTON

CREATURES ARE STIRRING



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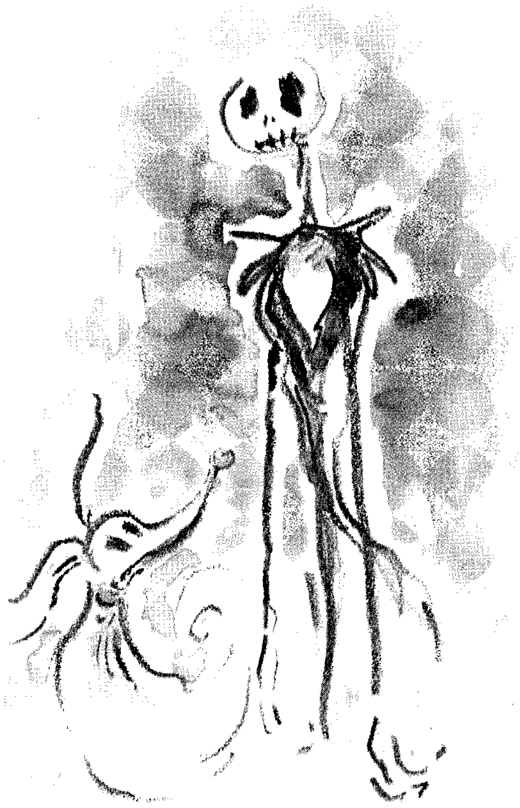
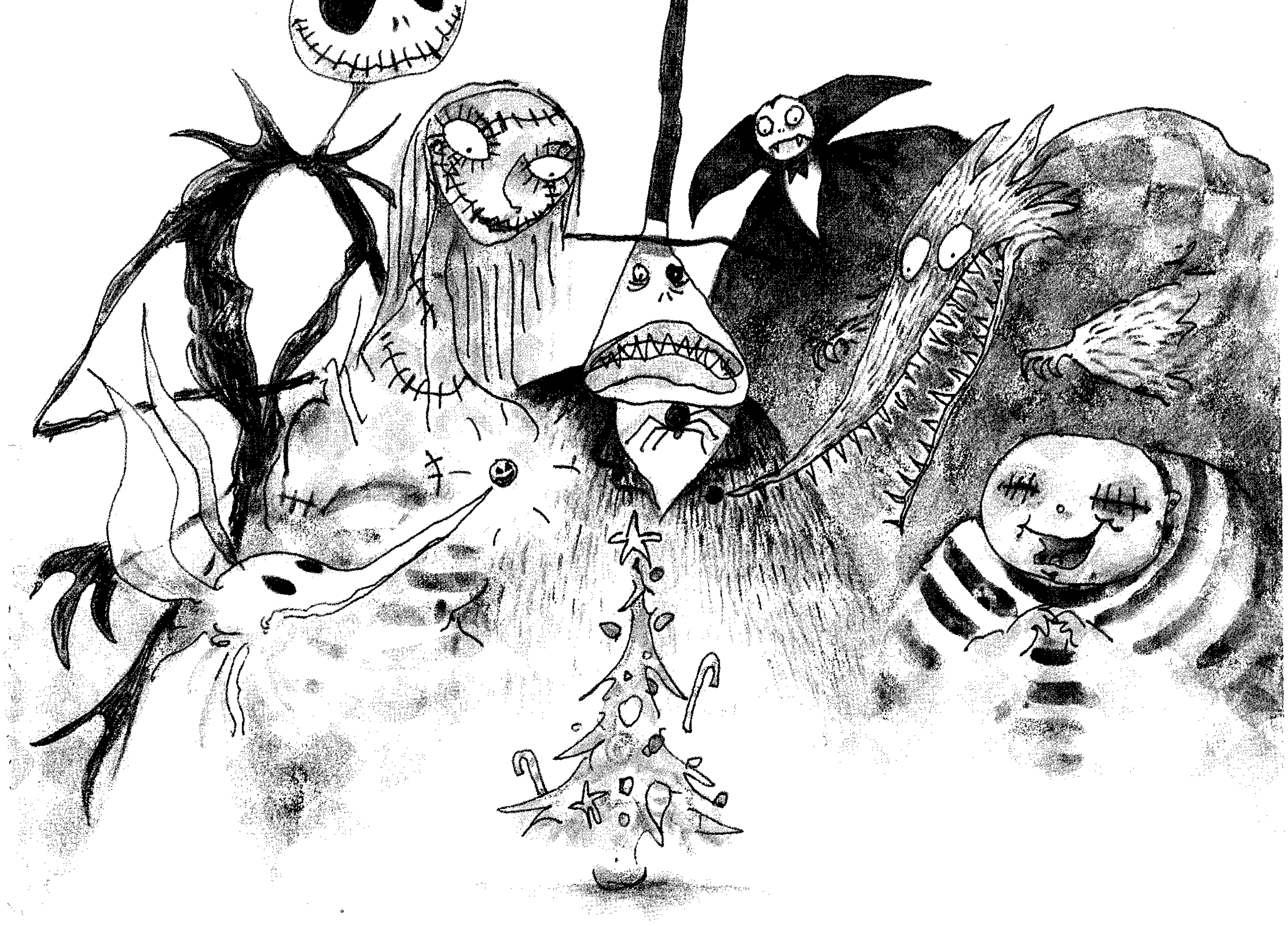
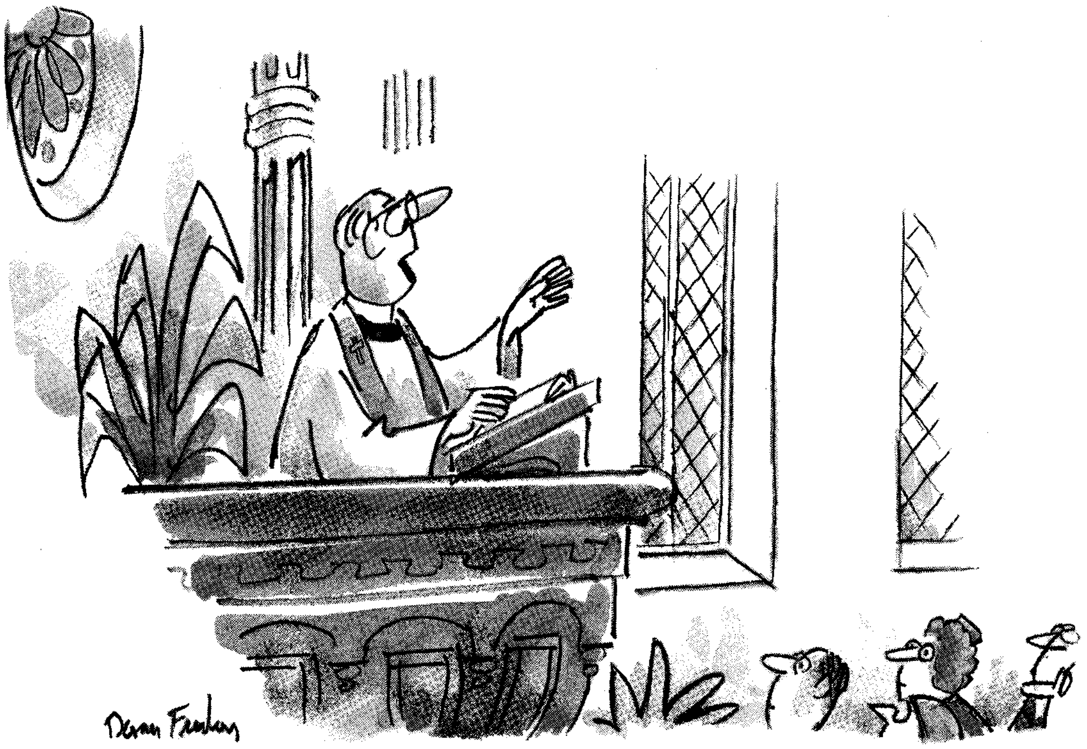
"Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas" opens in New York on October 13th. Directed by Henry Selick and scored by Danny Elfman, the animated feature has been showing up in Burton's sketchbook for ten years; two new pages can be found here.







"Having completed the formation of the earth, on the seventh day the Lord rested. Then, on the eighth day, the Lord said, 'Let there be problems.' And there were problems."

me to meet John Wayne," Mark Ross recalled. "And my father was very John Wayne-like to me—he exemplified the themes in those movies, like supreme loyalty and sacrificing yourself for someone else. He thought he could be everything to everybody. He thought he could be Jimmy Stewart and John Wayne and Cary Grant to people."

No movie character captured Steve Ross's imagination more strongly than George Bailey, the hero of "It's a Wonderful Life." "Steve Ross *was* George Bailey!" Spielberg declared, and he also said that Ross's "quest for the holy grail" was his perpetual search for a dinner guest who had never seen that movie; he would then screen it for the evening's entertainment. Family members agreed that Ross identified strongly with the character; indeed, when he checked into the hospital in Los Angeles where he was to undergo radical surgery, less than two months before he died, he signed in as "George Bailey."

Ross was not Bailey, of course. In fact, their lives, while they started out from a strikingly common point, diverged to the point of antithesis. The movie is a story about Bailey's yearning for escape, and about being trapped, and about the price paid in relinquishing all grand ambitions. Perhaps it was that, as much as anything else, which drew Ross to this movie; perhaps it comforted him, in a sense, to dwell on the cost of such self-sacrifice. Ross had dreamed the same dreams of escape that Bailey did, but, unlike Bailey, he had realized them, and many, many more. It seems, however, that he wanted, emotionally, to have it both ways. That had long been a characteristic trait. He wanted to reap the financial benefits of a founder, and he did, through his gargantuan contract and, ultimately, his payout in the merger, but he did not want to take the attendant risk, and so had not owned more than one or two per cent of the stock. He wanted to best his opposite in every deal, reaping untold financial advantage, but he wanted to do it so cleverly that the person on the other side of the table would leave feeling that he had got what he wanted, and that Ross was exceedingly fair—a feat brilliantly exemplified in the deal with Time Inc. He wanted to escape "Bedford Falls" and achieve his dreams, but he also wanted to be seen as someone with the generosity, loyalty, and penchant for self-sacrifice of a George Bailey—or, as his son recalled, one of the characters played by John Wayne.

Ross defies facile, conclusive analysis. For example, to say that he was incessantly manipulating to project a certain image is not to suggest that his generosity was all sham. The limitless giving that became his hallmark in later years had started early, and in instances where it certainly had no public purpose. His daughter Toni recalled that when she was a little girl her father seemed "obsessed" with Christmas: "There were so many gifts, and you'd be opening and opening and opening presents, and you had to get them all opened before breakfast. And there were rules: certain ones had to be opened first, and then there were others, behind the tree, and you had to get to those last—it was exhausting!" As she got older, Ross gave her "thousands and thousands and thousands of gifts." Finally, she had said, "No more." She says, "He was a giving tree. People needed things from him: that was his mind-set. He was stuck in that. That was the tragedy."

However murky the sources of some of Ross's behavior, though, this much is clear: he re-created himself in mythic proportions that were, by and large, untrue. The myth portrayed him as a man who was infinitely generous, who was loyal to the death, and who valued the well-being of his friends above his own, and sacrificed himself for the good of others. The reality was that his extraordinary generosity was funded to a great degree by the company; that his loyalty, in many cases, endured as long as people were useful to him; and that—driven by a compulsion to win—he tended to put his own interest ahead of the interests of others in situations large and small.

UPON hearing that Ross had checked into the hospital in Los Angeles as "George Bailey," one of his old friends exclaimed, "That was Steve's last deal! He figured he was probably going to die, and he wanted to try to convince God that he was George Bailey!" While it was unlikely that God would mistake the two, it was perhaps the ultimate success of Ross's success-filled life that after his death that is essentially how he was memorialized by so many people. Thus, in the end, he did have it both ways.

Roughly six weeks after the service in Carnegie Hall, another memorial was held—at the Warner Brothers studio, in Burbank. Quincy Jones said, referring to the fact that this was the third Ross memorial, "It's because when we get hold of a good human being it's hard to let him go."

Certainly that was the way Bob Daly, the Warner Brothers chairman, felt. Over the last decade, he had become strongly devoted to Ross. But when he first joined the company, in late 1981, and for some time thereafter, Daly—who had come from CBS, an altogether different world—had not known quite what to make of Ross and his profligate ways. Daly's bemusement, moreover, was shared by businessmen observing Ross from outside. Marvin Davis, the former owner of Twentieth Century Fox, said, "His methods of business everybody thought were terrible. He was not cost-conscious. He gave out heavy rewards. We said, 'How can they possibly pay that?' But it was a love affair over there—people *loved* to work there—and they were successful." On being asked why he and others, seeing success, had not emulated Ross's ways, Davis said, "I'm a businessman. A dollar's a dollar."

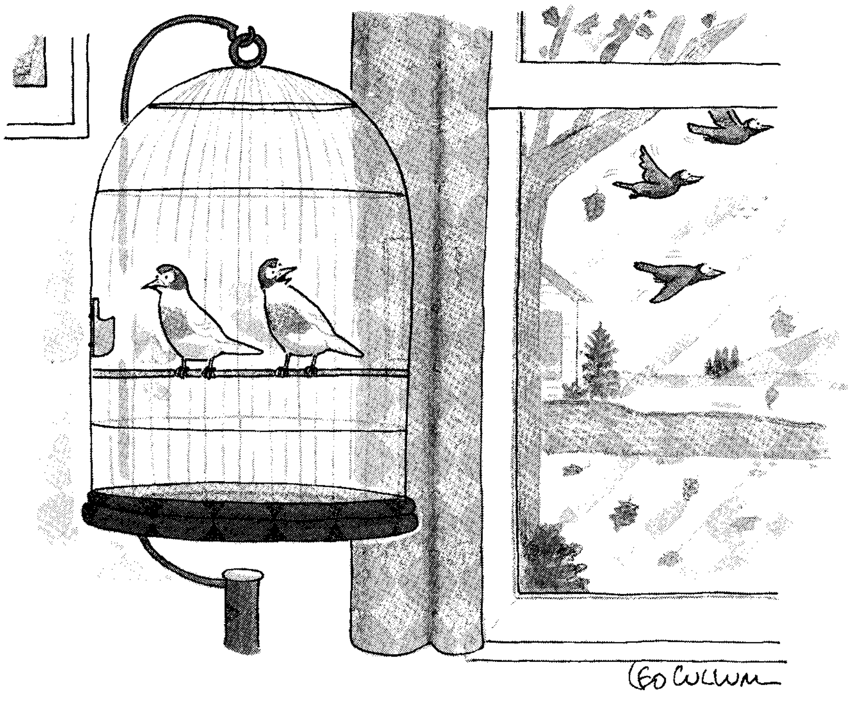
Daly said it took him two years to become comfortable with Ross's way of doing business. "I thought originally he was crazy. I'd say, 'Wait a minute—why are we doing this?' But I realized finally that what he was was a long-term thinker. There's a nice thing about being able to think long-term and make people happy—and in the meantime build up an enormous amount of good will."

Now Daly has appropriated Ross's approach. He said that after "Lethal Weapon 3" opened, in the summer of 1992, he gave a lunch for seven people—actors, the director, the head of production. "And after the lunch I took out an envelope and poured seven keys onto the table. Out in front of our building were parked seven Range Rovers, in all different colors. They went out and chose the color they wanted. And the most amazing thing was when I looked at the expressions on the faces of our executives—they were as happy as the faces of the people getting the cars. Our people thought it was the greatest thing, and they were so proud to be working at this kind of a company." Pointing to some of his competitors, including Disney and M.C.A., Daly went on, "They all look at the return. They *see* the way we operate, but they can't do it. It's not in them. They want a return on their dollar today. Their attitude is, if I give you this, what do I get? We never say that. We say, 'I'm giving you this because I like you. You're great. You don't have to give me anything.' That was Steve—and he taught us."

Because Daly has spent his career working for two men, William Paley and Ross, both of whom he considers "giants," he tends to compare them. And while Paley, in his view, had monumental strengths, he had none of Ross's almost compulsive humanity. "Steve was not perfect, but in the sense of being a chief executive, running a major corporation, the human part of Steve was as important as the deal-making," he said. "The human part was enormous. It was so plain how he felt about the people here. He talked to every secretary. If he walked out without saying goodbye to Ann or Marisa"—Daly's assistants—"he'd say, 'Oh my God! I didn't say goodbye,' and walk back in. And if Ann did anything for him while he was here, a dozen red roses would be on her desk the next day. I saw Paley walk through that CBS building for years, and he didn't talk to anyone but his own secretary." He added that, though he had worked for Paley for twenty-five years, he believed that Paley would not even have remembered if Daly had children.

At the studio, Daly produced for his friend a tribute, entitled Celebration of a Life, that would have made Ross, the showman, proud. In one sense, it was even an improvement over the East Hampton funeral: there were no family speeches, and so no exposure of that which was real and was lamentably wanting. It was an infinitely better event than the Carnegie Hall service, which Ross, in his lexicon, would surely have termed a disaster. Instead of trying to make Ross into what he was not, this production stuck to his own version of who he was, adhering to the script that he had created for his life: a uniquely American parable of fantasy, escape, and enterprise. And, because three months had passed since his death, the memorial was more festive than funereal—the perfect romantic ending to a romanticized life.

It was appropriate for Ross to be memorialized at the studio, for the studio had always been the favored child at W.C.I., its employees those on whom Ross lavished attention most copiously. It was home to the stars, whose egos he seemed never to tire of caressing. And



"There goes our attorney, headed for Florida."

although he was, quintessentially, a man of commerce, he liked to think of himself more as a nurturer of talent. Here in Hollywood, too, Ross never needed to feel insecure about being relatively unschooled, and a nonreader, as he did in some circles in New York; in this street-smart culture, he was on even ground. Finally, this was a world of people whose métier was the creation of illusion. They made movies, Ross created his persona; the two were not altogether different. For some of them, at least, Ross exemplified a *lived* art.

The evening's roster was rich with stars, and it also included not only Daly and Semel but other executives who had worked with Ross for many years, among them Frank Wells, now president of the Walt Disney Company, and Mo Ostin, chairman of Warner Brothers Records, each of whom had Steve Ross stories to tell. Ostin, who generally avoids making speeches at all costs, agreed to make one on this occasion. He recalled that he and his wife, celebrating their thirtieth anniversary in Paris, were having dinner at a restaurant where Ross was, with a group at another table; suddenly, a thirty-piece string orchestra appeared and began playing "Our Love Is Here to Stay." "We couldn't believe it—that was Evelyn's and my favorite song when we were dating! And then we looked over at Steve Ross and saw that mischievous twinkle."

Ostin concluded, "He *loved* people. He wasn't the typical corporate head who only thought about the bottom line. He treated his executives like artists."

Quincy Jones, who called Ross Aces, for his card-counting talents, and who as he spoke gazed repeatedly at a huge blown-up photograph of Ross that faced the audience, told the assembled crowd that he and his friend were sometimes on different wavelengths. He recalled an occasion a number of years ago when Ross, who had been deep in thought, suddenly emerged from his reverie and said, "Q, we've got to court the Baby Bells!"

"Well, you *know* I didn't know what he was talking about," Jones said. "I thought he meant those little cheeses. But if he said we had to court the cheese, hey, I was ready. His gig was the future."

Whoopi Goldberg, who said she had never got to know Ross that well, recalled that she first met him when they were filming "The Color Purple," which Spielberg was directing and Jones was producing, and Ross came to visit them on the set. "He was this sexy, good-looking guy, we were talking about movies, he knew all these things, so after a while, I sashayed over to Q and said, 'Who *is* that guy?' And Q said, 'He owns Warner Brothers.' I said, '*Oh!*' I felt, you know, like I'd had a thought about a priest." She recalled, too, that before she found out who Ross was he had been counselling her—in what many in this crowd knew, firsthand, was his trademark fashion. "He was saying, 'You have to *ask* for things.' I said, 'Uh-huh.' 'You have to *ask* for the plane.' I said, 'Uh-huh, who do I ask?' 'Ask Q, ask Steven.' " She concluded, "I just knew him as a nice cat who remembered me and would ask how I was and cared."

Warren Beatty had not known Ross that well, either, but he, too, had a story to tell about the first time they met. It was in the mid-seventies, and he had had dinner with Ross in New York. "After dinner, we kept talking; we went for a walk around the East Side. It was midnight—then one, two, three A.M. We're talking, and walking. At three-thirty, we sat on a park bench at Fifth Avenue and Seventy-sixth Street. We talked about the demise of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. About the sadness of ex-athletes, how tough it was when you knew you weren't going to play football anymore. Who we found attractive, who smart, who not smart. About the sexual revolution, the excitement of it, the dangers of it. We got around to his concern that I had not been married, and he was afraid I was going to lose out on one of the great things in life. I remember walking back to the Carlyle with the sun coming up and thinking, Hey, it's the seventies! Maybe I could marry him!

"He was a guy who inspired belief very quickly," Beatty continued. "That talent to inspire belief you can't overstate in a field as fragile as making movies. Steve made you feel you were part of his company even if you were making pictures at Disney or Columbia, or wherever you might be."

Streisand announced that she was dedicating her next album to Ross. After declaring that "Steve loved making people happy," she told the following story: "I lost a piece of sculpture, I bid too low at auction. I came back to the country almost a year later, after shooting 'Yentl'—I got off the plane, and I needed to see some art. I went to an art gallery, and there, on Madison Avenue, was the same piece—three times as expensive. Being a nice Jewish girl, I couldn't buy it. Months after that, Courtney and Steve gave a dinner party. And at the top of the stairs was *this* piece of sculpture! And I thought how glad I was that people I love had it. I told Steve the story, about losing it at auction. He said, 'Look at the card' behind it.' It was a gift for me, for finishing 'Yentl.' How he found it, how he traced it!" She concluded, perhaps seeking to correct an impression to the contrary, "However, no gifts he gave could compare to his love and friendship."

The night before the memorial, when Clint Eastwood accepted an Academy Award (his first) for Best Director, for "Unforgiven," he had dedicated the award to Ross. Now he said that Ross had seen "Unforgiven" before he died, and had predicted that it would win an Academy Award. "Steve Ross passed away. Interest in the film in the press picked up. Maybe it's just irony—but if Steve Ross was indeed the spirit, then there was no way we would have lost last night."

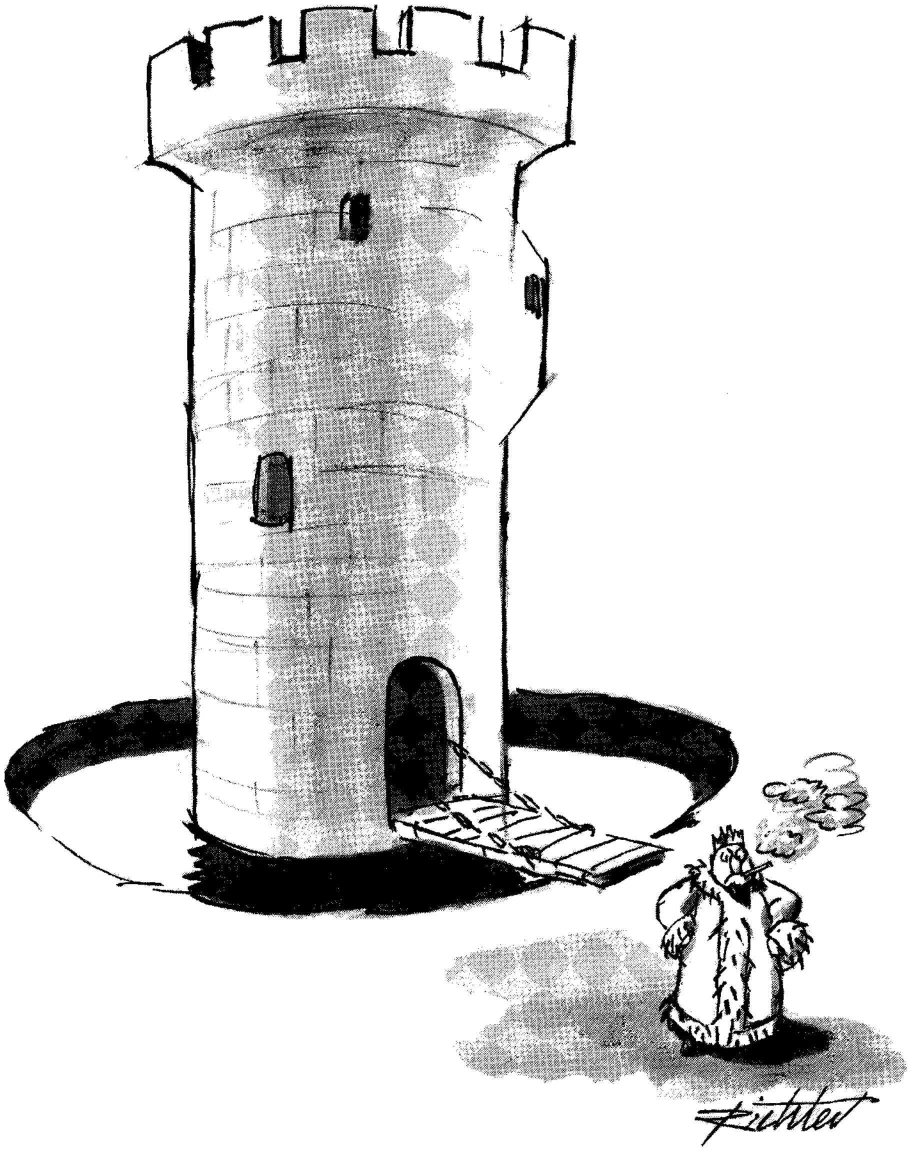
All in all, in this production that glided so gracefully over the surface of Ross's life, there weren't many moments that revealed more than they were meant to. Ross, of course, had not *owned* Warner Brothers, as Goldberg said Quincy Jones had put it—but the error was certainly understandable, since he had so much *acted* as if he did, spending shareholders' money as if it were his. And it was only appropriate for this impresario of largesse that planes and gifts should have emerged as one of the themes of the evening, but there was no examination of what brilliant bartering had been involved. The Streisand story didn't exactly make sense—one had to ask how Ross knew that she had missed buying this piece of sculpture—until a friend of hers explained, later, that Streisand had lamented to Ross her having missed out on the chance to buy it.

He, as one might have predicted, made it right.

But the fissures in the façade were few. And by the end of the event, when Semel, who had been the master of ceremonies, turned toward Ross's giant visage and declared, "You are still with us, you'll always be with us, and you were truly one of a kind," Ross's presence did seem almost palpable.

The tribute had been a smashing success. And the proof of its success was that it achieved, fleetingly, what Ross achieved when he was at his best: he made you want to believe. In order to really work his magic, he always had to be physically present and one-on-one; he was never quite as powerful in even a small group, was less powerful still in a large one, and was robbed of his power altogether when he was reduced to print in deposition transcripts; as one reads those, the trace of the hustler rises unmistakably from the page.

He was, however, at his best a lot. Those people and things he set out to win, he generally did; as Ahmet Ertegun commented, "Steve Ross to me was the ultimate winner—that is, a person who really could not envision losing." It was as though he created a circle of enchantment: inside it were, mainly, his Warner family and those associated with it, who were powerfully drawn to him, many of whom loved him; and outside were his peers in the business community and in Hollywood, who generally regarded him with wariness, if not distrust.



This night, faced with his image and listening to his admirers invoke him, one could feel again the pull of that inexorable charm. The tension was between knowing and yet, for a moment, being tempted to forget so as to believe; almost, an *un*willing suspension of disbelief. For in order to believe, as Ross's more fervent adherents did, one would have to forget that whole long history of chicanery (friends betrayed, an indictment eluded, company assets squandered, shareholders misled, deal-makers duped) that filled the *other* side of the ledger—across from the entries of his extraordinary talents, achievements, and (whatever his motivation) mountain of good deeds.

It was a formidably diverse and, even, cognitively dissonant whole to encompass; all the more reason for Ross, who had always had to fuse the two, to have existed in such a state of perpetual unease. That the fusion worked so well for so long—even retaining a vestigial force after his death—probably says as much about us, his audience, as it does about Ross. For, just as he appeared to the Time Inc. deal-makers as the promise of rain after a long drought, causing them, in their eagerness, to forgo any real inquiry into his past, so innumerable others, too, chose to look away from what was troubling in order to relish the charge (and also the favors) of his proximity. Some were drawn, in a straightforward way, by his talents; but it was the whole package, including self-mythicization, that had the widest popular appeal, striking a responsive, sentimental chord in so many people, much as a highly romantic novel or movie might. As his son had said, he thought he could be Jimmy Stewart and John Wayne and Cary Grant to people. To be with Ross (but only if you were a believer) was to escape the parameters of everyday life, which for him had always spelled ennui, and to enter *his* sphere—where experience (heavily orchestrated) was heightened, and fantasies routinely (at his bidding) came true.

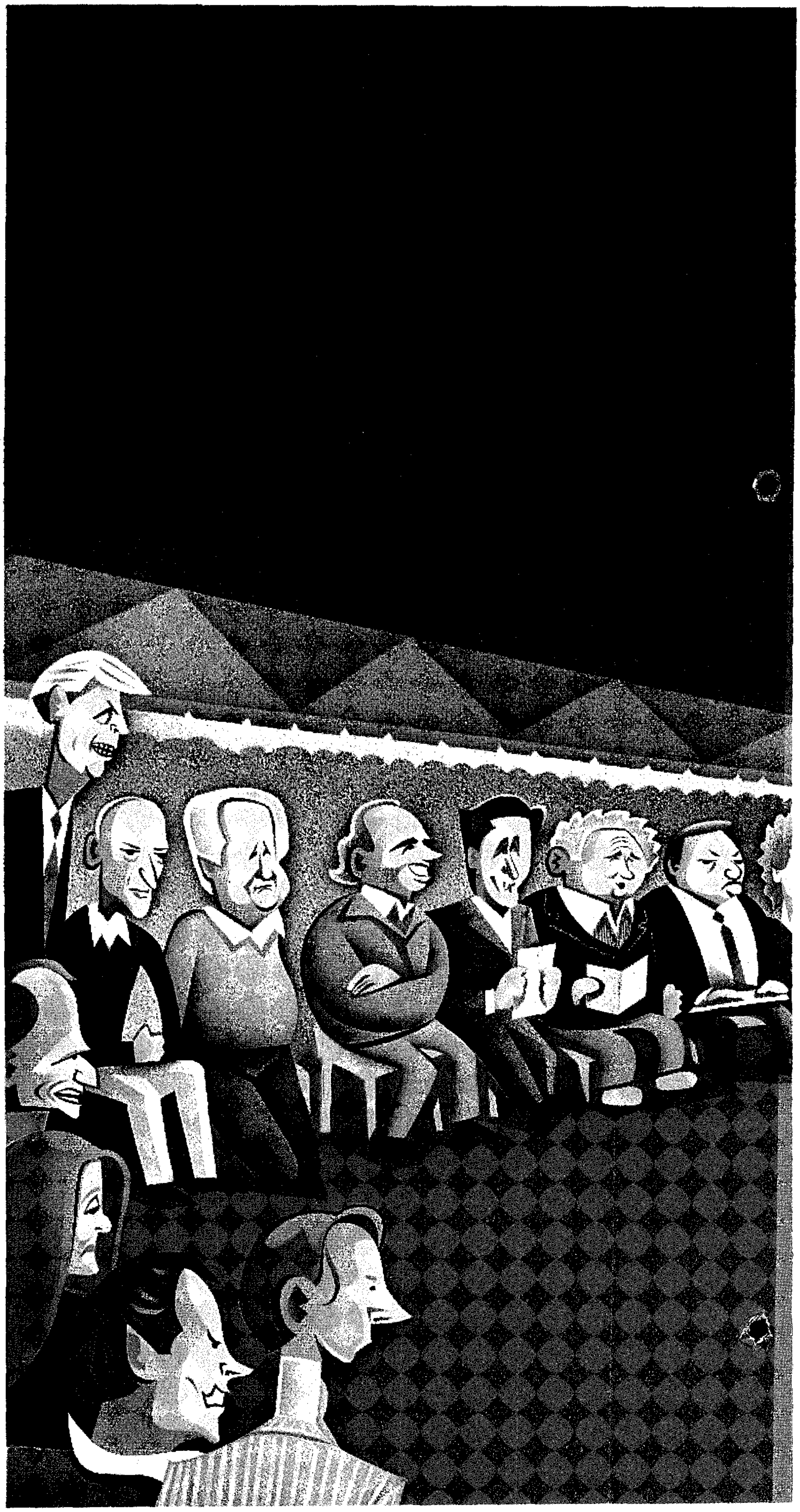
Here in Los Angeles, there was no mistaking that the company that *was* Ross was now bereft, and had no true leader. Earlier, Jerry Levin had mounted the stage and made some brief remarks: he had begun by saying "Whoopi, just call Guy Salvadore—no problem with the planes!" and in closing he had waved his hand in the direction of Ross's image, said, "Steve, here's looking at you, kid," and ambled off.

To Ross's friends and supporters, the void had never seemed so large. But one had to wonder, once again—wasn't that as planned? ♦

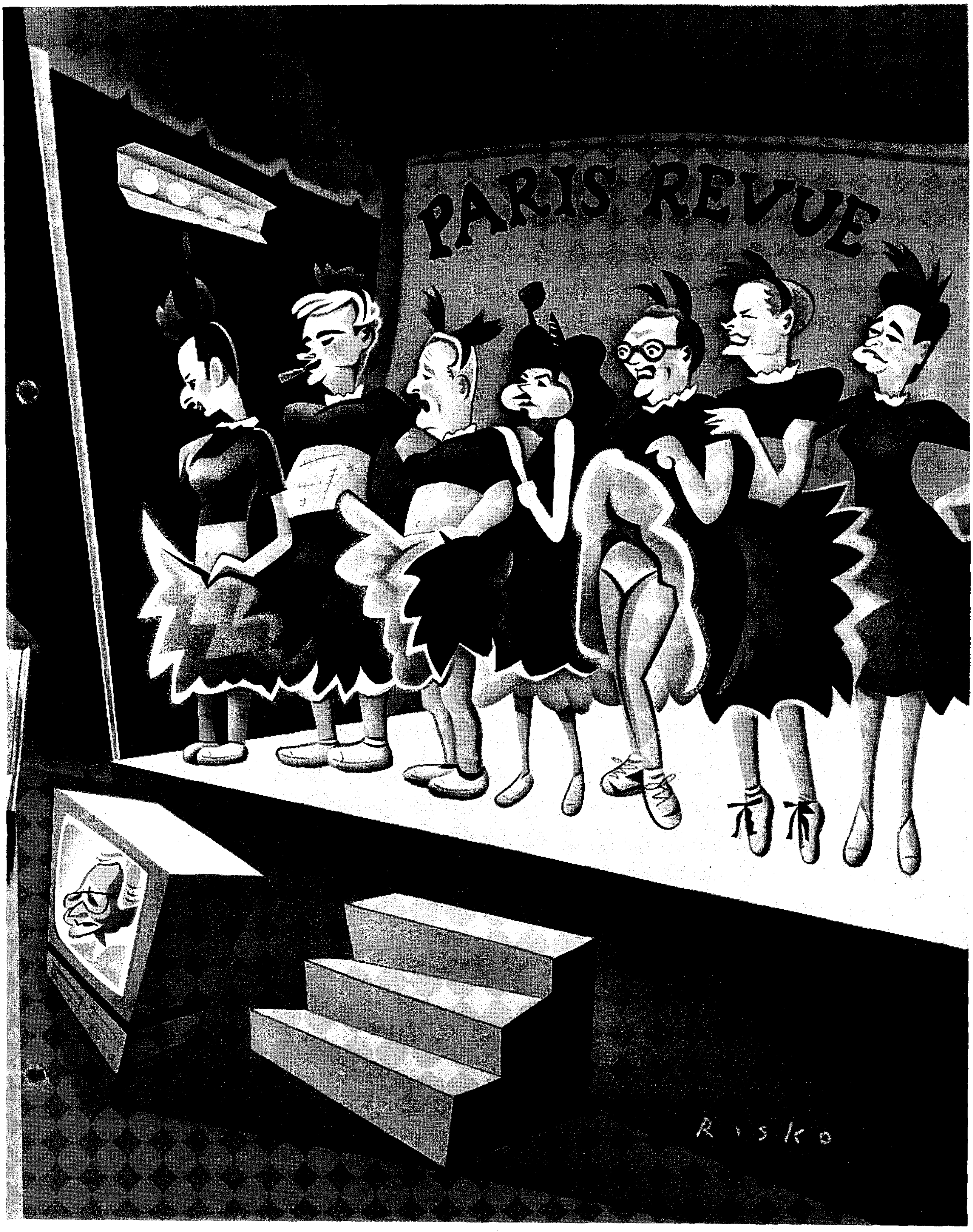
ARTIST AT LARGE
BY ROBERT RISKO

PARIS REVIEW

THE PARIS REVIEW was burning! Didn't get its accustomed N.E.A. grant this year! Not enough women and minority writers, said the N.E.A. (Actually, every good writer is a minority of one.) What was to be done? Why, one of the many things that the magazine's editor, George Plimpton, does best: have a big literary fund-raiser, to be called "Thanks, George!," with terminating pyrotechnics. Anthony Drexel Duke, whose very name has parapets, opened his house in East Hampton to three hundred and forty people—many of them undeniably older, white, and male—a couple of weekends back, and to a bunch of photographers and gossip columnists, who darted among them like pilot fish. The party started at dusk, with drinks and impending hypothermia down by the pool, while a string quartet was sawing away behind the diving board. Then up to dinner—by horse and wagon (really!) or shank's mare—in the lodge of the summer camp that Mr. Duke has established on his demesne for inner-city kids. Thirty-three tables of ten, bursting with talent, power, and—er, self-awareness. Styron, Vonnegut, Gaddis, Rush, Brodkey, Mailer, Minot, Doctorow, Janowitz. You tell us what Alec Baldwin was doing there. Then came tributes to Plimpton and to forty years of the trailblazing quarterly, delivered from an outdoor stage by human waves of celebrity. Best in Show was Norman Mailer reading from a 1958 interview with Ernest Hemingway. A videotaped message from George Bush vaguely acknowledged Mr. Plimpton as "one of the founders of all that," and then one female and six male writers, as if to tweak the N.E.A., dressed up as Parisian chorines and did the cancan. These events, and Mr. Plimpton's reflections on a newly unveiled bust of himself by the sculptor George Kelly, quintessentialized the evening's often poignant surrealism. Finally, dessert and coffee in the chilly open air, followed by spectacular Grucci fireworks, including a Niagaran cascade of white incandescence fifty yards across, in a vast field under the indifferent stars. —DANIEL MENAKER



Thoroughly Postmodern Milieu: From what looked like a breezy, élite retirement community, George Bush sent electronic regrets and regards to fellow-George, Plimpton, who watched from a front row that also included, from left, Tom Wolfe, Peter Jennings,



Mona Simpson, Dick Cavett, Anthony Drexel Duke, William Styron, Jimmy Buffet (Jimmy Buffet?), Alec Baldwin, Norman Mailer, Cy Coleman, Kurt Vonnegut, and Lauren Bacall. Girding their loins for a climactic cancan were Jeffrey Eugenides, Peter Maas, James Salter, Tama Janowitz, Christopher Cerf, Harry Hurt, and Jay McInerney.

FICTION

WHAT I DO FOR MONEY

BY HAROLD BRODKEY

At dawn, in the suffusion of light and return of visibility, in the woods where I camped out on my red-and-blue air mattress in a nylon shed-tent, open in front and partly at the sides and with a now luminous rooflet tied overhead to two guardian trees, I woke. The light and mist among the tree trunks, the near silence of the birds, the biological, organic clutter around me on the ground softened my mood.

I have a streak of biological piety. These are my woods, set high in the northern Catskill Mountains, not very high mountains. They are not very old woods, any more than are the woods in the adjacent state park. All this territory was lumbered over twice in the last two hundred years. In this glade, only two trees are particularly large, and one is a sycamore planted a hundred years ago and one is a pine about the same age.

The light makes the blue nylon a holy color, like a tone in a Bellini painting, like the color of a cloak of the Madonna; it is a glowing, Bellini blue, and it fills me with awe. The side of the mountain that descends, that falls, is on my right. Behind the descending columns of trunks of trees—saplings, and older, bigger trees—is a vast space of now luminous, as-if-new air. . . . In a harsh world, this silent, glowing beauty, this ordinary, momentary prettiness, is, as I said, a speechless, pagan piety.

Suddenly fully wakeful, straightening my clothes, lighting my spirit stove, I contemplate my situation. I light a cigarette; I am a dying man. I have an inoperable brain tumor. The process of finding this out took nearly two months. And I am being let go at work, in a harsh process—the company has been sold and is losing money or not making enough; the errors have been those of top management, some of whom are being let go as well. I am one step down from top management, and my work on this level has been successful—in the general debacle this has aroused jealousy, rage really, even hatred. I may have been too distracted by the headaches I was having to handle things well. Was I arrogant? No. I was rather meek and apologetic. But I went on being right, and lo, a vicious war.

I am thirty-five years old, divorced, not estranged from my children, but they are turning into people very like my wife, whom I don't miss. It is a kind of programmatic, thought-out, mind-filled selfishness, a self-willed sort, not shallow, not stupid, not even cold: more like an intelligent Episcopalian tantrum among theories of selflessness and God knows what all. I mean it is this in my ex-wife and children that isolates me.

I don't know how bad any of this makes me feel. I have a brain tumor. I have sliding films of headache and sporadic interferences with vision. I suppose I have despised my bosses for a long time now, thought them amateur and self-loving, hardly honest in relation to the work of running a large company. I suppose I have despised—and forgiven—my ex-wife for as long. I don't think I have been disloyal to any of them, not very much, not very often. But I'm not on the whole a careful man, and I become frantic inwardly—it is a moral uproar—when I am, I suppose, conceitedly convinced that I can see the wastage, the extent of the bad decisions, the crude wrecking of lives and possibilities in others—which they are egoistically, obstinately set on causing . . . that corporate and *suburban* selfishness.

I am said to be lucky, but the work I do—product design, but at the point where such design is redone to become industrially and commercially practicable—and its quality, the things I'm after, are insulting to some people. . . . Or perhaps it's just competition. I have been aware of this, told about this since college. And in college. And long before that, in grade school. I have been able to adjust and to protect myself to some extent until now, but last year I began to slip. The tumor. Destiny melting my mind, maybe. Probably.

Anyway, I am being treated shabbily, filthily by former allies and colleagues. They sweat and tremble, but they say, "We want you to leave. . . . We don't think this last idea of yours is any good." Then they take it back and say, "It's good, but you'll have to work with Martin. . . ." I have never worked with Martin Jones: he's an ambitious little madman, a cheap thief—of ideas, of office supplies, of money, when he can manage it. He's the keeper of the little escort book—he's the upper-echelon pimp. With the bribes he offers and the inside information he gets and his tirelessness and the pity he purposefully arouses—he is always either ill or suffering a domestic tragedy—he is irresistible on a certain level. He is pudgy and pretentious, clever and whiny, repulsive, even loathsome. But he makes even that work in his favor. He himself boasts that he is tirelessly rotten—violent. . . . That's his way of saying: *Fear me.* Everyone in the office does fear him except for the two operating officers at the top. Martin became obsessed with me just before the collapse of profits. He is determined to gain control of my working life—this is the man I have to deal with now. Surely they know this is forcing me out. Does everyone eat shit who earns a salary? Does everyone who eats shit insist that everyone else eat more shit?

Little Phil Moore, the short one, the coked-up one, at one time a friend—I brought him to these woods—he is working with Martin, the horror Pimp, co-opted or willingly. He came to my office and said, "You worked us over. . . . You're putting us through hoops. . . . You don't like us: you want to leave." Claiming innocence for him and Martin. He's just doing his job. And he's working out his ego in putting the squeeze on me. Well, he's partly right. I *want* to leave. But I didn't initiate my leaving. They have to give me severance.

They are half afraid of me—of the stink I might cause. I am half enraged. Tired. But they are not afraid enough of me, and the negotiation over severance pay has been difficult verging on nightmare. Martin, the horror Pimp, has no fear of lying; he lies to any extent. He farts and talks stupidly and calls me at four in the morning to say he has a discarded memo of mine speaking of my resignation. He speaks in a false voice. He uses being disgusting—and silly—to drive someone like me out of a fight. I lose my will to fight Mr. Protozoan Slime. It is not like tussling with Achilles; there is no honor anywhere in the moments of such a struggle. And he is proud of himself.

He has asked me to give in because we are both Presbyterian. He's said, "We stick together, don't we, we white men?" The issue is whether I'll take less money and vamoose and let him win. Or try to work with him in the time I have left. Or I can sell these woods and hire a severance negotiator. But I don't want to sell these woods, these moments of light. Ah, Christ.

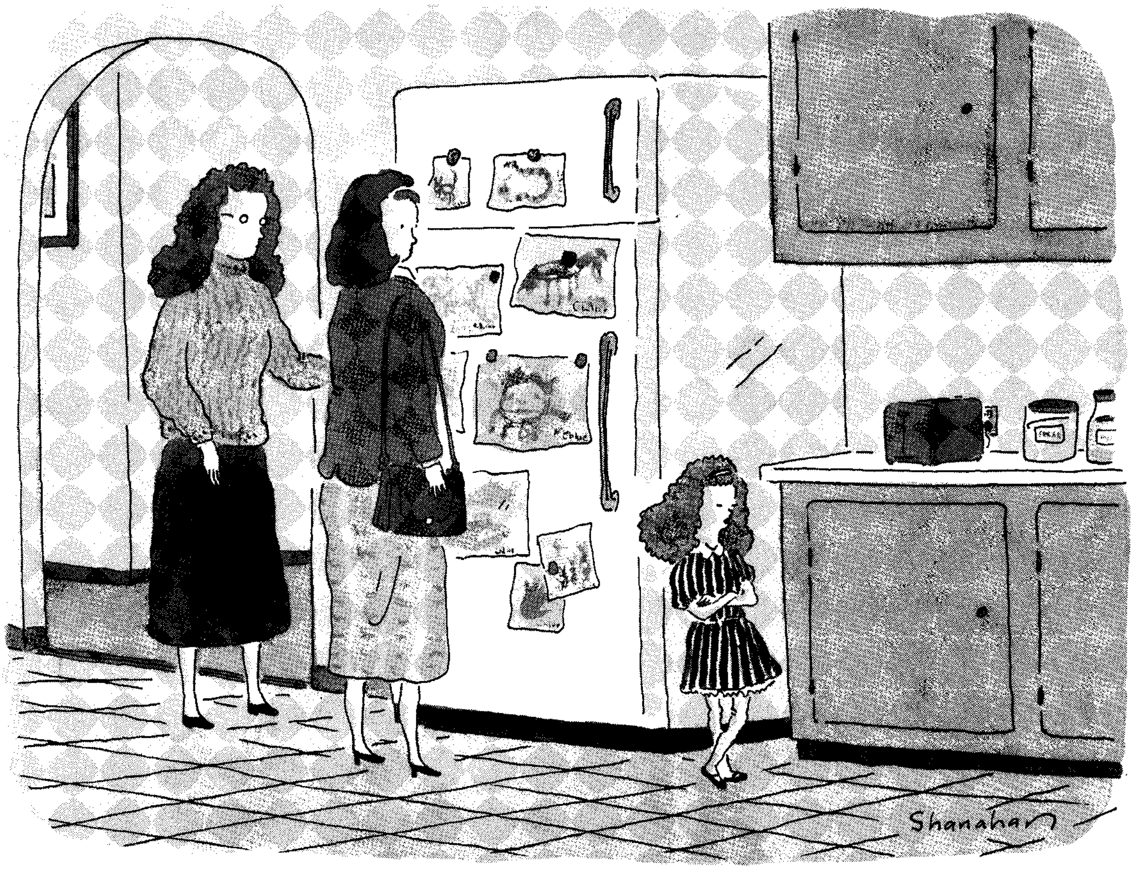
I ACTUALLY feel a little rested, refreshed, prepared physically for the day, for anything that happens, for everything that is existent, including death. I feel I understand the violence of the world. *Egos are involved* . . . what a dread phrase . . . *in the procedures of unreason.* I've lived a long time in relation to the weird unreason of others. But this moment is colored by the softness of the morning air, wilderness air, and mountain light, and the odor of trees and rock. I have the energy to be *serious* or *unserious* . . . *savagely indignant* or *mordant.* . . . The energy, the clearheadedness . . . In the office, as in any sport, I have to be like *them,* the opponents, in order to do battle or to deal with them, in order to come up with useful tactics and the requisite language noises.

God, office politics. They have eaten up my life. My chief strength in the world (such as it has been until now) is to be snotty and airy toward ugliness, is to skate right by it. It is treacherous toward democracy for me to be snotty and airy about it in relation to my colleagues, although it is patriotic to find America beautiful after all, or before all. Treacherous to my colleagues, whom I despise. I don't give a fuck about anything they give a fuck about. Except perhaps money.

I am between marriages. I suppose I should think about my two children. I come to the woods in order not to think about them. I don't know how much of my death I want to share with my children. I don't like to hide things from them. But I do cold-bloodedly think of and warm-bloodedly feel the massive, tantrum-y selfishness my ex-wife has encouraged in them. Actually, she told me she would do that if I did not return to her. *What do I care about them? You know how selfish I am, Hank,* she said. Do you suppose she would want me now, on the skids and tumorous? I don't want to die with her. I can teach charitably or I can charitably empty bedpans for the short rest of my life, if I get enough money from the firm. The life I have left will be better if I accept the need to be sly steadily, with daily regularity: *Dearest, tell me, do I look blankly friendly? Can you tell me if I give off a hint of menacing slyness? Do I appear to be a good citizen?* My life would go better, but I would sicken and die even faster than I am sickening and dying now, and doesn't dying free you from the need to accept the world any longer?

I WENT to a country wedding once—a Methodist minister's son married a pretty girl in an agonizingly pretentious stone chapel upstate. Built on the shore of a lake in a grove of birches, the chapel was pretty in a horrendously striving, American way—self-consciously Christian, trying for tradition. It had some architectural quality but not a quality of spiritual exercise and no aura from generations of belief. It was not pure with the hope of God, like the wooden churches visible across the lake from it. The morning had been rainy. The rain stopped just as we settled ourselves in church; the sun came out; the turn-of-the-century stained-glass windows began to glow effulgently in a kind of harsh American glory of light.

The first bridesmaid down the aisle



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STAR VEHICLES

1. I'M NOT IN "DARLING"

Bette Davis has no reason to be jealous of Michelangelo Antonioni
and yet when I slept over at her house, in the late nineteen-seventies,
she kept me up all night complaining about a formerly illustrious career.
How her words came out is more important than the words themselves.

"I'm not in 'Zabriskie Point.' I'm not in 'Blow-Up.'
I'm not in 'L'Avventura.' I'm not in 'Isadora.'
I'm not in 'Georgy Girl.' I'm not in 'Woodstock.'
I'm not in any great sixties epics.

"*I'm not in 'Darling.' I'm not in* 'Midnight Cowboy.'
I'm not in 'Easy Rider.' I'm not in 'Valley of the Dolls.'
Why didn't they give me the Garland/Hayward role
in 'Valley'? Why didn't they film 'The Love Machine' starring me?

"Why didn't they film '*Every* Night, Josephine!' starring me?
Why didn't they remake 'I'll Cry Tomorrow' starring me?
Or redo 'Mata Hari'? I'm a limitless god, like Apollo,
but certainly I'd have done remakes in my dotage.

"*I'm not in 'Morgan.' I'm not in* '8 ½.'
Ignorant armies crash my party.
I'm the haunted Bette always in your thoughts.
I'd have done any part, had they asked. Had they asked."

And then I woke, and discovered myself in the act of speaking, slowly, methodically;
and from the cup of tea, ambiguous steam clouds, like locusts, were issuing,
in which I could read the pattern of my future,
a wilderness stretching farther than the exiled eye could see.

2. THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE

Sophia Loren, whose birthday, September 20th, I share,
displayed naked breasts early in her screen career
but then, with clout, curtailed these compromising exhibitions.
Does she wince when she sees originary nude footage?

I hid Sophia's photo in my drawer beside a miniature Torah.
In the photo, she is topless; in the photo, time has a mimic
relation to time. She moves forward into the atmosphere
of which she is already the sterling, solitary constituent.

If the photo aroused me, the sensation of arousal was joined
to Egypt, to the bitter herb, to the afghan my mother knit,
to scented desert isles, and to Lesley Ann Warren
in "Cinderella" and "The Happiest Millionaire," pomegranate sheet music

to one of its hits purchased on Saratoga Avenue,
dividing line I crossed during torrential rain.
"Before you were born, boys played football on Saratoga Avenue,
now a dangerous thoroughfare," my mother said, commenting

on masculinity, diaspora, decadence,
and the nature of streets, which change names and functions,
just as boys turn into men and then into dead men,
and parsley—transformed by saltwater—into tears, and stars

into all varieties of immortal, blurred concupiscence.
What was the name of the "Happiest Millionaire" hit?
Where is Lesley Ann Warren now? Where are the women
who wear Sophia Loren glasses? To what bounty do I remain blind?

—WAYNE KOESTENBAUM

had a two-year-old child who would not leave her or let her march without him, and so the woman marched carrying a bouquet in one hand with a child balanced on her hip and held by her other hand—a different bouquet. She marched with a curiously mild, unassertive, consciously lovely, almost sated-but-frantic air down the aisle in the overwhelming light.

Is it a fate to have been happy?

Here is another definition of a life I have not lived. At a night club upstate that wedding weekend, an oldish and overweight, gray-haired woman with an obvious paunch and a white violin and a backup band sang and fiddled a song that she had written. She sang and chanted that she could get everyone to dance: "I'll make you wild. . . ." She sang and chanted it. She had set her amplifiers at some high register and everything she did was loudly amplified, a bit thunderous and a bit shrill with electronic treble, electronic tremble. She was loud, hypnotic, gifted, and her insistence was inspired in its way, that she could make us wild. . . . Dionysiac. And people did begin to dance. The woman became more and more suggestive, dirty, and commanding, in a somehow Scotch-Irish way that was *gypsylike* and irresistible. It was also part of the American backwoods, the camp meetings, the harvest festivals.

Everyone in the audience, in the crowd, who was not crippled or arthritic—the drunken midlifers and the eighty-year-olds and the stoned younger ones, countryside working class—danced stiffly-wildly. We were whitely and self-consciously orgiastic. In a somewhat consciously traditional way and as rebels as well. The sexual self-revelations, such as they were, suited the room and the lake. And explained the privacy of clubs and summer places. Explained my parents' summertime snobbery, explained night clubs and lakeside resorts in a new and somewhat comic way, a touching way, with a sense of kinship. All the things I have not lived were present. I never was Dionysian.

BAD news, broken heart, absurd tension. Still, the light among the trees and the fragments of sky, pale, glowing blue like the nylon over my head with the light in it, say it will be a pretty day. *Je m'en fout-isme*—I-don't-give-a-damn-ism: is that the note I whistle? From the time I was old enough and strong enough to have my own way at least partly, even as a boy, I have insisted on living part of each day, a moment or two, without suffering. And without cold willfulness. A civilized moment or two of freedom and of emotion.

I bought this land last year, five acres; four are wooded and steep and set among gray, lichenous rocks and closed in by a forty-foot rock face and a lower, sloping meadow—small, less than an acre, and ringed with hemlocks—and in the woods between the meadow and these rocks a small, green, wooden, three-room house with three porches and a steep, wood-shingled roof and summer-camp shutters.

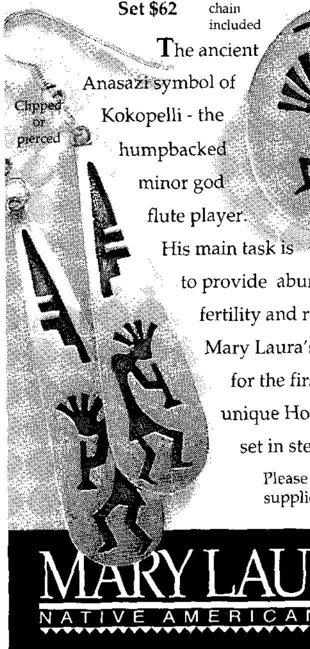
I would like to do a tree census—find out how many trees I own, how many branches, how many twigs and leaves. And bugs. A quarter of a million leaves. A million leaves . . . I am a millionaire of rustling leaves . . . of grass blades. Of molecules of air . . . I own the air I breathe at this minute. Cubic yards of air, invisible stones of a luminous temple.

What are the statistics? Seventy-five maples, eighty beeches, seventeen oaks, seven junior oaks, seven hemlocks including one, uh, picturesque giant. And so on. But I am inventing that. Sitting now on a log, drinking coffee, having a death-time cigarette, sitting on my red-and-blue air mattress, I look around at the uneven ground and nearby cliff, the trees that grew against the rock and that are fastened to the rock, leafy pilasters. The scattered and decaying leaves on the ground. The trees I own are not quite singular for me; they are *trees*, a generalized mass: *my trees*. Do you suppose God is this way about souls? I haven't named any of my trees. In the morning light, I look around—*the leaner, the life-is-a-beech, the straight-up maple near the boundary line to the east, the birch society, a crooked copse*. . . . Those aren't names of long-term affection. The feelings I have toward them are half-baked, inchoate, are unlike any feeling I have had toward animals or people or things . . . the patient, fluttering trees . . . A wind is springing up, stirs my semi-named, half-nameless trees. . . . A blur of vegetation, branches thickened to the eye by their motion, the cinder roses of shadow move on the ground. . . . The terms come from a Spanish poem: the smear of vegetation . . . cinder roses. . . . Thought stops. The great invisible chain links of mountain wind lash at my woods. I listen with abrupt, incredible simplicity to the sound of that wind, the forceful and shifting exercise of the morning wind. All around me spread shivering whorls of tethered shadows, an infinity of motions of a million twigs. The world is active and stirs eccentrically and rustlingly, stirs differently in the blond, sunlit upper air and in the more constrained greenish lower air. Nature has said, *I will make the tethered trees wild*.

Dionysiac release? I suppose so. A rehearsal for the release of seeds. An invisible embrace. The motion of the mountainside.

Clouds, too, are a smear, they move so rapidly in the wind. Capitalism has a spiritual side—a pagan spiritual side and a Christian one, one of self-examination and of values, of truths beyond truths. And it has a civilly spiritual side: a keep-your-house-pretty side, a wear-the-right-clothes side. The responsibility for the condition of the immediate world is clearly placed, whether the community uses its knowledge of such identifiable responsibility with intelligence or not. These trees will outlive me unless I become thoroughly a capitalist or a destructive dying man, rampantly assertive, and have them lumbered.

I control the fate of the trees rustling in a morning wind, in the shudder of the air. The cinder roses of the skidding and fluttering and whirling shadows are sometimes like the splashed gray letters of a restless alphabet slipping



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over rocks and dead branches on the ground, over wild grass in the meadow, grass stained reddish here and there by reddish seed heads, with yellow and white wildflowers visible among the grasses. A dry stream, over moss, sedum, tansy, goutweed, bluets, wild mustard, and wild phlox, rockets in openings among the trees. Shadows and leaves in their vegetable and aerial life move over me in a profound sweetening of the moment.

My life is a mess; yet I am fairly happy. Perhaps unfairly. I can't say I understand happiness. In my case it always has an uncaring, what-the-hell element and is a form of dizzied satisfaction that is unfeeling at its center, freed from feeling, almost a cry of *enough*. The sense of completion is like a satisfaction with its spine of shameful triumph . . . of peace and escape. It is shallow of me and in my blood—an old traditional thing—and it is the deepest and most savage emotion I ever have, it is the deepest part of me, to be happy. It is based on my ignoring an important number of things, but I have a rebellious nature of this sort. In a pagan sense it is a serious business to be happy.

This is absurd, this sequence of thoughts. How far would I go morally, toward death, how far did I go, to own my so far unnamed, not deeply known trees? If I want money now, I have to think harder about how to negotiate, how to handle *cleverly* the situations that will establish the amount of money I will have while I die. I have to figure out how to put the fear of God into the pimp-Jones and the rat-Moore.

I will probably do what is necessary—what part of my soul do I want to save at this point? What do I care about? When I was a child, no one told me what life was actually like. . . . I wish I had been told. Now I am waiting while the wind mumbles and stammers, twitches, as if it were alive and standing still, an immense, transparent ruminant-acrobat, a glass creature resting from its stampede of a moment ago. I wait for it to return, the large, invisible, active, somersaulting mountain wind among the trees in my wood. The brief, embracing wind.

Death? Ugliness? Who gives a goddamn fuck? Who gives a good goddamn fuck? Here it comes, the first transparent steps—and leaps—of the wind among the trees. ♦

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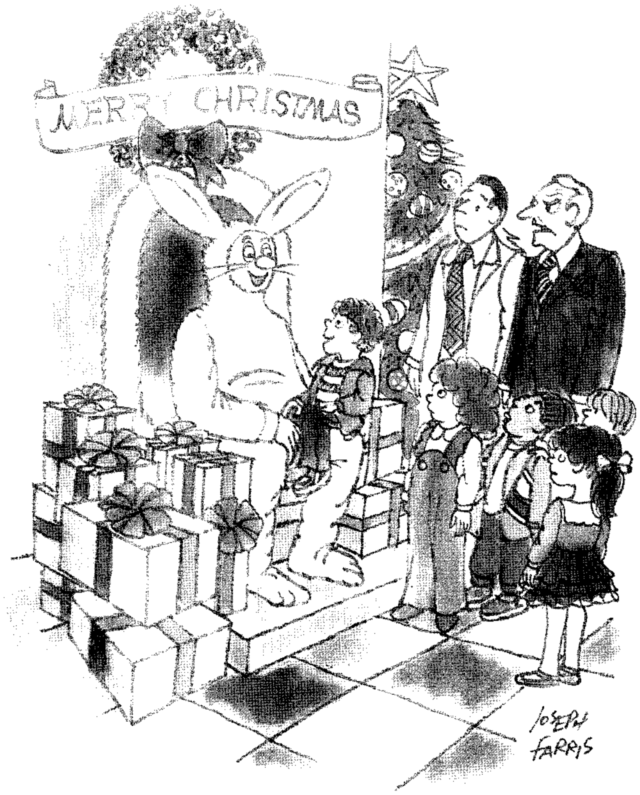

"Who hired him?"

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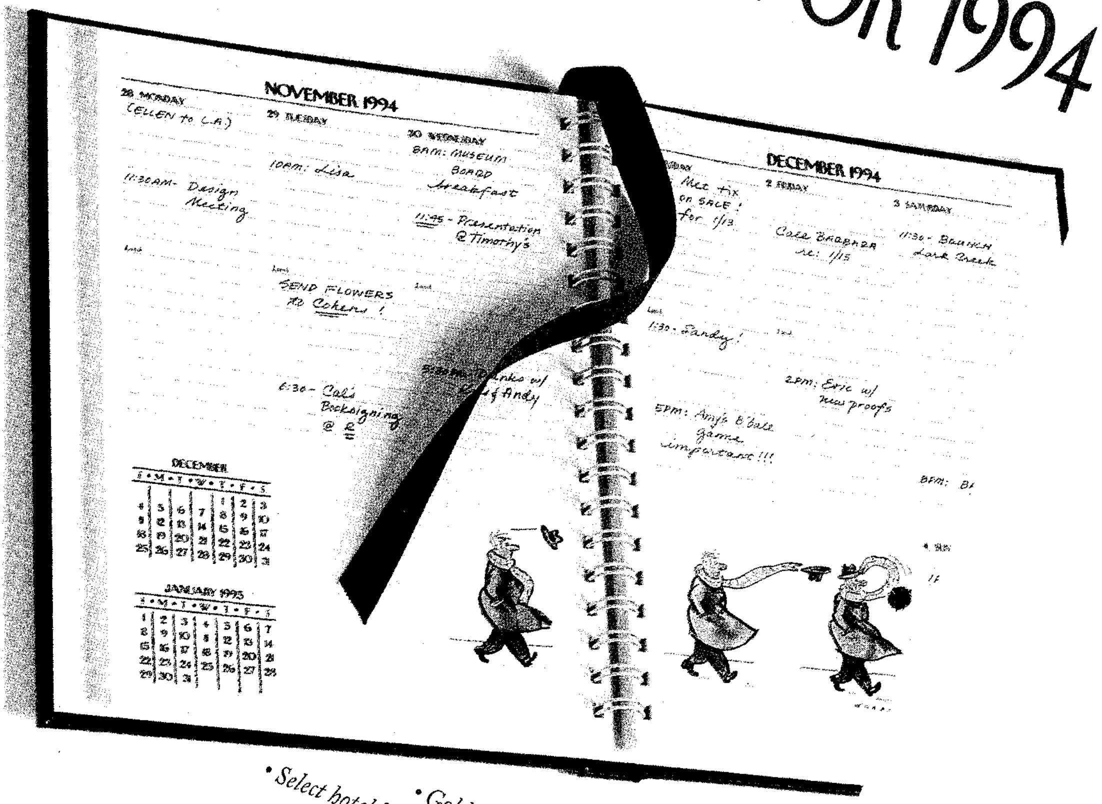
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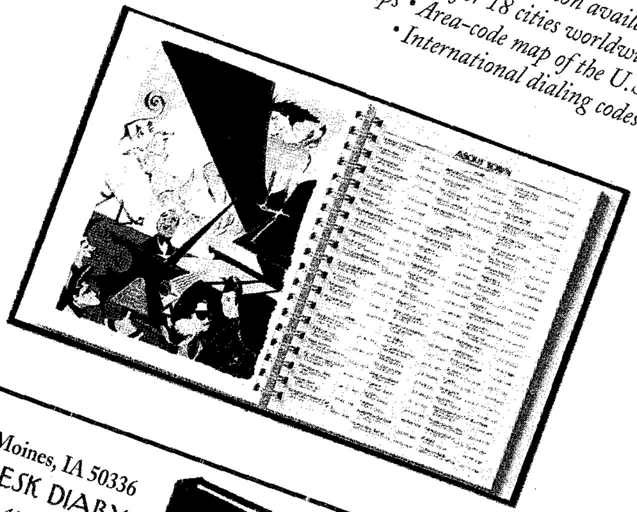

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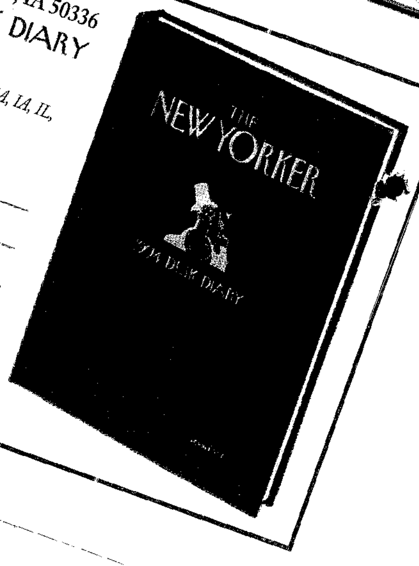
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THE CRITICS

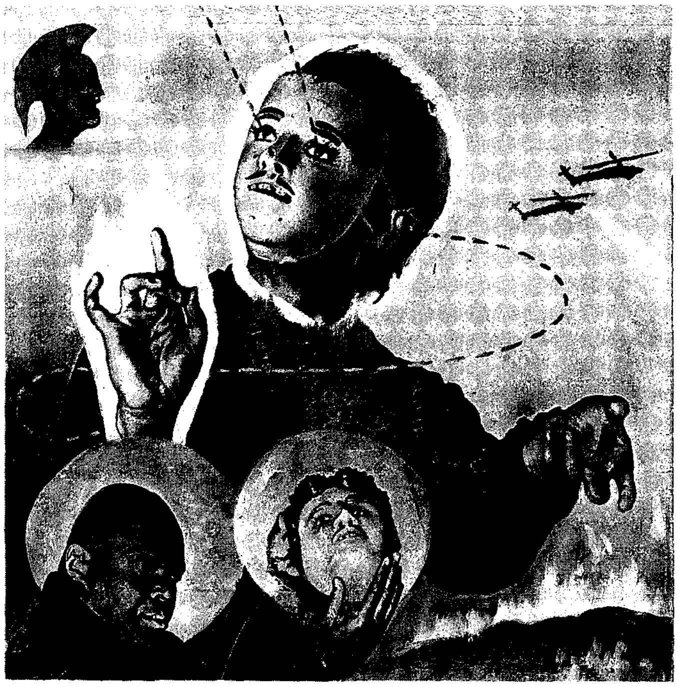
THE THEATRE

INVENTING THE ENEMY

BY JOHN LAHR

"A CLASSIC is a house we're still living in," says Peter Sellars, whose version of Aeschylus' "The Persians" will close out the extended Los Angeles Festival at the Mark Taper Forum this month and will go on to Paris and Berlin later in the year. "As with any old house, of course, you're going to fix it up and add a new wing. It's not an exhibit. It's meant to be lived in, and not admired." The Sellars wing includes a chorus of two, a messenger who dances, a battle that takes place during the Gulf War, Sudanese oud music, and the dead Persian king Darius rising from his grave to speak in sign language. These are nifty additions to the old edifice, and allow Sellars, like Aeschylus, to get the exotic onstage while talking to a society about its democracy. In "The Persians," the first extant tragedy, and the one in which our modern notion of the "barbarian" originates, Aeschylus invented an enemy, but in extending Aeschylus' metaphor to the barbarity of our own time what Sellars can't invent is an audience. At the previews, and even on opening night, by Sellars' count about a hundred of the Taper's seven hundred and fifty customers walked out of the uninterrupted two-hour show. To Sellars, a thirty-six-year-old entrepreneur of controversy, the trot brigade is a sign that the play is doing its work. "Controversy is crucial to the functioning of a democracy," he told me. "The ability to present these shows in public is the ultimate test of a democracy, and its validation. It tests people's tolerance of different opinions and difference in general." But what makes good democracy doesn't necessarily make good theatre. How can you talk to an audience that won't stay in its seats? Sellars' attitude displays all the symptoms of avant-garde delirium: wanting mass communication but disrespecting the mass.

"The Persians" is Sellars' first theatrical outing since his production of "Ajax" for the American National Theatre, at the Kennedy Center, seven years ago. In the interim, he's turned his genius for abstraction to opera. "In theatre, abstraction has always meant exile," he says. "In opera, it's a given that you have to use metaphysical language and exist in realms that are at once realistic and abstract." Sellars' return to Aeschylus is also a return to his obsession with the issues of how to have a national debate and how to make theatre assume its original Greek function of dealing with large-scale historical questions. "The Greeks realized that these questions had to be addressed not through gossip columns and trash journalism but through poetry, music, and dance," he says. "Our notion of political theatre is a little primitive." Aeschylus' boldness in imagining the other is matched by Sellars' bravery in linking the play's theme to the Gulf War and to a contemporary multicultural agenda. From the Indian wars to the Cold War, fear of the other has been a dominant American historical theme; and it could not be more relevant to the contemporary Los Angeles community, where last month it was announced that last year the county ran up a tally of thirty-five hundred drive-by shootings. Aeschylus, of course, was ostensibly writing about an outside enemy; in his dramatization, the luxury, tyranny, class-consciousness, and excessive emotionalism of the Persians were used both to reflect their weakness and to celebrate the superiority of the new Athenian empire's democracy. But what is self-congratulatory in the original is cautionary in Sellars' postmodern reconstruction. Aeschylus fought in the Battle of Mara-



Director Peter Sellars wages new battles in Aeschylus' "The Persians," with Martinus Miroto (top) and Ben Halley, Jr. (left).

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thon and brought to his account a soldier's sense of the torment of battle and the meaning of victory. Sellars' task, undertaken with the help of his adapter, Robert Auletta, is to humanize the Iraqi people and to make an audience understand both their humiliation and their fear at such an overwhelming show of force. Instead of asking the newscaster's question of why the military didn't finish the job, the play asks why it continued what was clearly a massacre. The quick, clean war that the West broadcast on its TV screens was not the war the Iraqis suffered in their streets. "The Gulf War was one of the most censored wars in the history of journalism," Sellars writes in the program note. "The human toll was largely discounted or screened out with ideological or commercial filters." Sellars' play, like Aeschylus', is a lament for the dead, and it tries to give a human touch to the media euphemism "collateral damage." The play likens contemporary high-tech destruction to Xerxes' pontoon bridge across the Hellespont—a display of hubris and omnipotence which foreshadows the doom of both the Persian and the American civilizations. Why, the defeated chorus asks, didn't they show our dead and our agony on television, and the queen of Persia replies:

> Because if they did,
> if the world actually saw,
> then it might be stopped.

The woman beside me, who turned out to be a former Israeli diplomat stationed in Los Angeles, whispered loudly that the parallel with the annihilation of the Persians didn't hold: "Saddam is still there. The Republican Guard is still there. The Iraqis are still there. They were clobbered but they were not defeated."

When I recounted this to Sellars, he bristled with the vigorous outrage that also distinguishes his play. "We took out their water, their electricity, their telephones," he said. "Not just military targets, the entire city of Baghdad. In a desert country, to remove water is serious. The sanctions that were created for the Gulf War are still in place. There are still children dying from malnutrition and a catastrophic absence of medical supplies. In every way, the devastation of Iraq was total."

"The Persians" recounts the devastation in words but turns panic into music. The play opens in the lull before the storm, and Sellars makes the most of the heart-pounding uncertainty, with each

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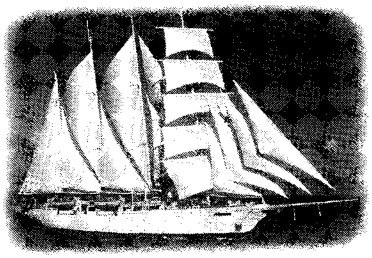

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voice of the chorus counterpointing the other to create a sense of static and rhetorical overload. The actors are set against a white wall on which are reflected only their shadows and the silhouettes of five overhead lamps hanging like bombs. Darius' burial mound is four stones placed at center stage. A turbanned musician, Hamza El Din, who composed the score, sits in the front row playing the oud. The chorus is divided between the orotund public rhetoric of Ben Halley, Jr., and the subdued, miked voice of Joseph Haj, who sits on a Persian rug—the production's only scenic element of color or comfort—to indicate a private world. Unfortunately, the poetry is not as minimalist as the props, and the torrent of words takes its toll. The overkill here is verbal as well as military. For example, the chorus says that the treasure sought by the West is oil:

> those dark, lubricating,
> percussive, sacred, slippery fluids,
> civilization's dark emollient . . .

When the battle rages, it is conjured best not by language but by abrasive industrial sounds, to which the masked Javanese dancer Martinus Miroto adds sensational angular contortions—a whirlwind of agitation in which, a faceless Everyman, he variously becomes a wounded child, a bereft mother, and a dead soldier as the narration chronicles the bewildering Western firestorm. The lamenting queen of Persia, Atossa (Cordelia González), doesn't translate as successfully into Sellars' game plan. Positioned upstage center, in a purple suit, behind a microphone that casts a shadow over her face, Atossa is understated in appearance, but overblown in characterization. "As you know, I have been spending most of my time working on a book about Darius, our early years together," she says, by way of indicating her dazed widowhood. Sellars tries to turn her into a kind of Mary Tyrone of Greek tragedy. He told me, "We wanted to fill out the family play and actually feel what a First Lady goes through. She's the closest connection to us, because we also have heard the cries of people suffering and done nothing." Ultimately, though, Atossa is both the voice of prophetic conscience—"Have we taken too much? Have we gone beyond some unknown but sacred line?"—and the voice of high camp. "Come, my dear son, and we will change your clothes," she says to

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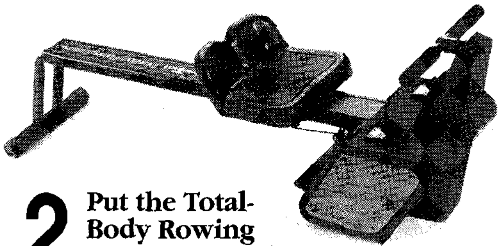

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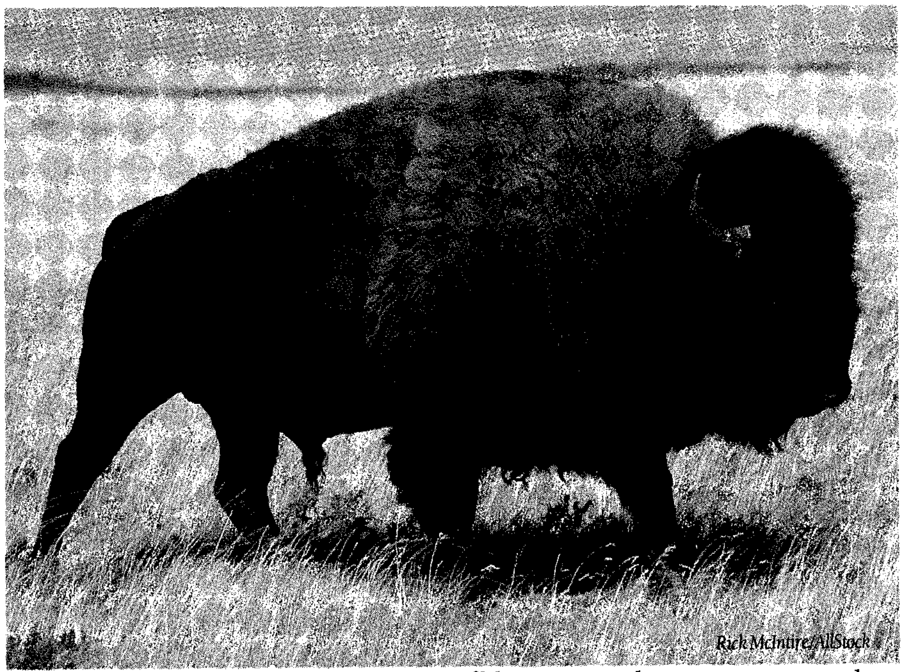

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Xerxes, interrupting one of his chest-thumping harangues.

In casting the deaf Howie Seago as the risen Darius, Sellars attempts to incarnate his vision of America's historical amnesia. At first, Seago signs his meaning without a voice-over, leaving the audience restless and bewildered—a confusion that Sellars claims is deliberate. "It's exactly like our past," he says of Darius' gesturing. "We stare at it rather blankly." Only when John Ortiz, as Xerxes, the queen's defeated son, swaggers onto the stage does the audience snap back, connecting his fury and revenge to Saddam Hussein, rock-throwing Palestinians, and rioting street gangs in South-Central L.A.

Ortiz adds oxygen to the evening. He struts around the stage spitting spiders and inveighing against the West, a macho exhibitionist who turns defeat into a star turn of hectoring denial. "I defied the United States of America! The most arrogant people in the world!" he says, in a speech that touches on the symbolic importance of Saddam's Pyrrhic victory to many Middle Easterners.

But the evening, despite its incidental sparkiness, doesn't catch fire. Why? In trying to say so much, Sellars delivers too little. At the finale, Xerxes hands over his kingship, and the chosen leader turns out to be the Everyman, who now removes his mask. Is this the new barbarian—an Asian? Or—since the new king begins his balancing act with a Balinese dance that's applauded by the others in a kind of vote of confidence—is Sellars suggesting a new multicultural alliance? The play won't say, and neither will Sellars: he wants his metaphor to mean everything. The result is not so much cunning as capricious. It may get him attention, but it loses him an audience. "One has a mission to try and work in a way which is as visible as possible," he told me, casting himself as a rebel without applause. "To work with exactly those things that are officially denied in this society. So there's always a built-in permanent tension. It's no accident that Aeschylus ended his life in exile. Finally, even the Greeks had had enough. They weren't grateful. As the saying goes, 'If you want gratitude, buy a dog.' "

The American theatre needs Sellars. It needs him to be brilliant. It needs him to think against society. It needs him to find new ways of storytelling. But, if it's a debate about America he wants, Sellars can't get the public's ear if his cast is looking at its back. ♦

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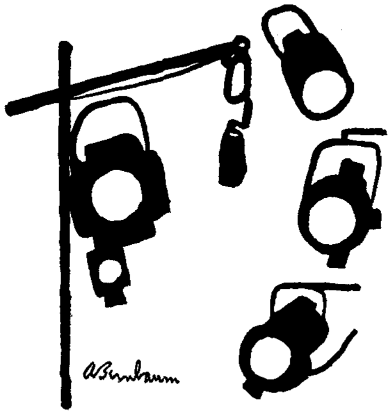
THE THEATRE

ON THE FARM

BY EDITH OLIVER

"THE FIERY FURNACE," by Timothy Mason, a production of Circle Rep, which opened last week at the Lucille Lortel, stars marvellous Julie Harris but, for all its shortcomings, is not a mere vehicle. Set in a farmhouse in rural Wisconsin during the years from 1950 to 1963, it tells, in a meandering way, the story of a woman and her two grown daughters, who must escape from their men. At the beginning, the younger daughter is fleeing to the University of Chicago; her mother comes down the stairs, suitcase in hand, to announce that she is going along, deserting her husband, who is a tyrannical fan of Joseph McCarthy and makes life hell for the family. She doesn't, though; she remains with him, and during most of the first act we watch the elder daughter, the mother of twin boys, as she is bullied by her own husband, at first an incipient drunk and later a fully developed alcoholic. In the second act, the younger sister returns with a Jewish husband of liberal persuasion, who can perform sleight of hand and who, by a trick, sets the older one free. The father dies, and then the mother breaks loose, too. That is all there is. It should be noted that the names are a pain. The sisters are called Faith and Charity; another child, Hope, died in infancy.



The actors, under the direction of Norman René, do a good job with it, but there is no "it." There is Miss Harris, of course, and Susan Batten is especially impressive as the married sister, although she is afflicted with a fake Midwestern accent that is like a straitjacket on the poor woman. (The "Dialect Coach" is one Ralph Zito, presumably engaged to teach the cast the Wisconsin patois.) William Fichtner, as her husband, and Ashley Gardner and Zach Grenier, as the other couple, are also admirable. The set was designed by Loy Arcenas, and Walker Hicklin, who designed the costumes, must be held responsible for the god-awful but not inappropriate sweater worn by Miss Batten.

ELI WALLACH and Anne Jackson, married for forty-five years, are now appearing in an entertainment, "In Persons," an anthology of dramatic memorabilia, at the Kaufman. At the beginning, Mr. and Mrs. W. march down the aisle of the theatre and onto the minuscule stage and immediately start reminiscing about their first meeting, at an Equity Library Theatre production, and then proceed to their training by Sanford Meisner and Martha Graham, among others. Since the show is as much a social as a theatrical occasion, criticism would be churlish—an abuse of hospitality—and compliments are unnecessary, the Wallachs being the Wallachs. But an inventory of my own preferences among the recitations and imitations and excerpts from plays and movies would include a verbal duel that has Miss Jackson thrusting lines from Dorothy Parker at Mr. Wallach, who responds with lines from Samuel Hoffenstein (how good to be reminded of him!); anecdotes by Mr. Wallach about a reading of Tennessee Williams' "The Rose Tattoo," and about Williams himself, and about appearing, in London, in "Teahouse of the August Moon"; and a scene from Murray Schisgal's "Luv." Most valuable of all, I guess, is the spirit of the two beaming stars. The extraordinary setting, a model of ingenuity, is by Ann Keehbauch—a matter of concealed doors and drawers and cubbyholes behind what at first appear to be empty picture frames. Martin Charnin directed. ◆

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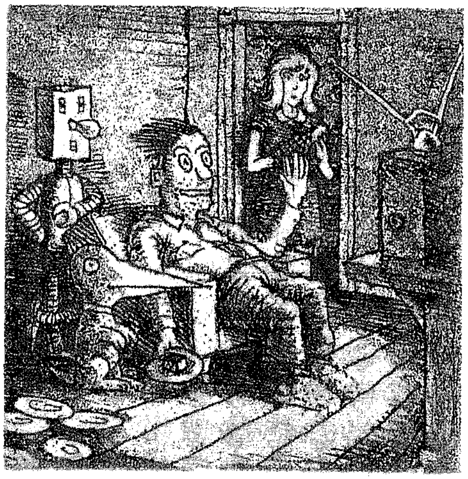

HAS David Letterman had a personality implant? Letterman suffered a deep burn when NBC chose Jay Leno to fill Johnny Carson's seat as the host of the "Tonight Show." After hosting "Late Night" for more than a decade, Letterman felt that he had earned the nod. Eleven years is a long time to warm up in the bullpen. In the biggest defection since Barbara Walters switched networks, he ditched NBC to headline his own late-night show for CBS, setting up a grudge match against the "Tonight Show"—may the best Nielsens win. In the press conferences and interviews preceding the launch of "The Late Show," Letterman was his usual deliberate-jerk self, blowing cigar smoke as he took jabs at Joey Buttafuoco and at his new boss, Larry Tisch. But ever since he hit the stage of the Ed Sullivan Theatre for his August 30th première and received a standing ovation, which has been repeated almost every night, he's had the look of love. He's lost weight, his eyes are clear, his problem hair has a manageable shine. He's become a regular sunbeam. Gone is the grump who would pout at his desk on "Late Night" about lumps in his Slurpee, or plunge into a protracted hacking cough just to annoy everyone. He's gracious with his guests now, extending the hand of fellowship.

Not everyone enjoys this miracle makeover. The actress Ellen Barkin told him to his orange face that she didn't like the new Dave; she preferred the old, "fat and sour" Dave. ("Fat and Sour—new from Nabisco," Letterman replied.) But he hasn't had all the poisons pumped from his system. There are still traces of his former snot. He left Jeff Goldblum nonplussed by praising his acting in "The Accidental Tourist," which almost immediately seemed less like a mistake than like a put-down: not only was Goldblum not in the film but his ex-wife, Geena Davis, was—indeed, won an Academy Award for her performance. But this is trivial compared with the hostile outbreaks on "Late Night," where Cher called him an asshole and Shirley MacLaine wanted to scalp him alive. He has real authority now, and it rests lightly on his shoulders. The new king of late-night comedy, he has ascended to the swivel throne.

Late-night shows used to offer the braking power of a train slowing into the station, a big band coasting into the end of a tune. They were heavy but efficient, easing the viewer into bed like a letter into an envelope. With "Late Night," Letterman turned the talk show into a tacky clubhouse where the pace was more erratic. From the moment Larry (Bud) Melman first waddled onto the set to flub his lines, "Late Night" prided itself on being just amateur enough to subvert slick formula. Planting Chris Elliott under the seats as a mole person ("Greetings, surface-dwellers"), playing pranks on other NBC shows, using trick cameras like the Monkey-cam, holding dogsled races and archery contests in the halls, "Late Night" was a small guerrilla action directed mostly at itself. A lot of its silly high jinks originated on Steve Allen's old Westinghouse show, but where Allen himself was often genuinely giddy Letterman was always somewhat distant. Distance was the lens that allowed the viewer to think of the comedy not just as a laugh opportunity but as a loose, ongoing installation—an art piece. Like the music of the B-52's, the comedy of "Late Night" was collegiate kitsch.

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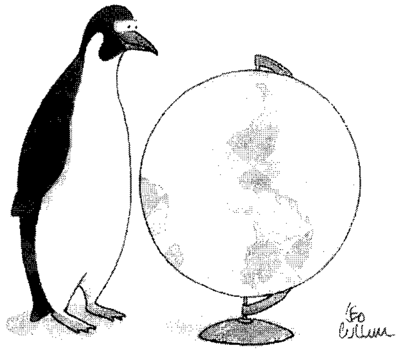

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Letterman's writing staff, many of them recent Harvard graduates, injected just enough *Lampoon/Spy* inside knowledge into its smart-dumb humor to make critics feel like accessories to the action. (Strike enough ironic poses in the mirror and you, too, can be called self-reflexive.)

Once Letterman had set up shop at CBS, a strategy change was in order. He more than built himself a better Dave; he remodelled the talk-show format into a modern-reproduction antique. He and his staff must have realized that they had deconstructed talk-show idioms on "Late Night" down to the last dot. They reversed the process, magnifying their vision. The new show would be a ritzy affair. It would have the brassy fanfare and bright lights of an opening night. CBS's expensive decision to buy, gut, and renovate Broadway's Ed Sullivan Theatre to house "The Late Show" made this gala idea possible. The purchase united two gold mother lodes of popular culture. Establishing a link to Ed Sullivan's CBS variety series summoned the glory days of network TV. Placing Letterman on Broadway near "Cats" and "Miss Saigon" cast him as the unlikely continuer of theatrical tradition. ("Hi, I'm Dave Letterman—Mr. Broadway.") So unsentimental is Letterman that he could draw on both pasts without seeming to dabble in nostalgia. Boasting a monster neon marquee, a stage with a wide sweep, and music provided by Paul Shaffer and the CBS Orchestra (another grand touch, since his band has no string section), "The Late Show" is a cheerful blast of pseudo bombast. Where "Late Night" was a nontraditional talk show, "The Late Show" is neotraditional, a mixture of glitz and broken glass.

This consolidation effort has left Letterman's rivals fighting over vacant property. They're trying to subvert and parody a format that he's moved uptown. On the "Tonight Show," which used to set the standard, Jay Leno tries to emulate the Letterman of "Late Night" by doing all sorts of wacky stunts—man-in-the-street polls ("Who's the new surgeon general?" he asked Los Angeles airheads), celebrity look-alikes planted in the audience, funny phone calls. It is a sorrow to behold. The supporting players seem stuck to the screen like refrigerator magnets. The audience-participation segments resemble some-

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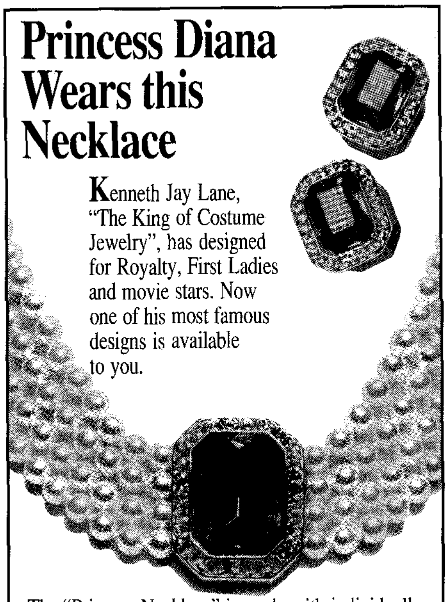

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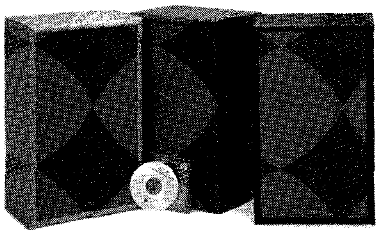

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thing you'd be subjected to on a cruise ship. (Let's put Harry in a dress.) Leno has lost whatever ability he may have had to ad-lib his way out of Death Valley. His voice gets yappier as the microphone goes limp in his hand. Aside from the poor writing, the problem is that Leno limits himself to being a joke dispenser. In a backstage look at the "Tonight Show" for the E! Entertainment Network, he said that the formula for being a talk-show host is simple: "Write joke, tell joke, get check." And the jokes can't be mean or personal. Mustn't make Mom mad.

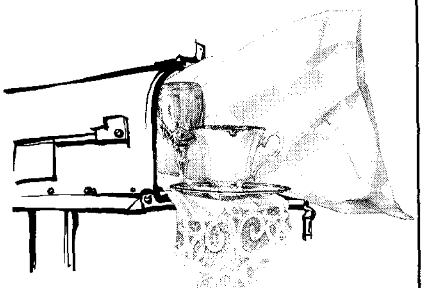
The rap on Leno has been that he's too nice. Nice doesn't cut it on the streets. Nice doesn't get you top bunk in the cell. If Leno reminded everyone that it's his show, he might earn a little more respect. He's often ignored by his guests, especially broody-intense actor types like Andy Garcia, Richard Gere, and Alec Baldwin, who seemed to be staring inward for a glimpse of their own images as Leno tried to be their interviewer-pal. He apparently can't even impress his staff. It's embarrassing to watch him buddy up to his bandleader, Branford Marsalis, whose body droops with can't-be-bothered disregard. The brother seems downright cold. These are minor slights.

Far weightier is the approval that has been withheld by Johnny Carson. Although technically Leno is Johnny Carson's heir as the host of the "Tonight Show," performing in the same studio where Carson held court during his entire West Coast reign, it's Letterman who has emerged as the chosen son. (Keeping a significant silence concerning Leno, Carson let it be known that he had watched Letterman's opening show.) It must frustrate Leno, having his inheritance devalued by the very man who made it possible. It must smart. Perhaps that explains the moment in the E! special when Leno, escorting the viewer on a tour of the Burbank facilities, pointed to lobby photographs of NBC stars that he labelled "the wall of the dead." The next shot featured three photographs of Johnny Carson.

The set of the new Conan O'Brien show offers its own gallery of the (un)dead. Premièring on September 13th, NBC's "Late Night with Conan O'Brien" places the Harvard graduate and former "Simpsons" producer in a bachelor hangout surrounded by framed black-and-white photographs of Ernie Kovacs, Tom Snyder, and Joe Franklin. The bumpers between commercials feature O'Brien's Jimmy Olsen face pasted over publicity shots for "The Love Boat," "I Love Lucy," etc. He's being primped as Generation X's media spokesmodel: Conan O'Brien—TV Boy. Like Leno, O'Brien must wrestle with the ghost of Host Past, taping in the same Rockefeller Center studio where Letterman did his show. It's mostly a tickling match. "He's no Let-ter-man," an old souse complains in a staged bit before being hauled away by security. Conan O'Brien and his brain trust clearly believe in preëmptive criticism. For the first few weeks, he harped on his inexperience and obscurity. "I promise I will get better, America. Just give me a little time."

A tall, lanky redhead who wears his hair in an Edd (Kookie) Byrnes flip, O'Brien bounces from the blue curtain each night ready to boogie down to the music of the house band, the Max Weinberg Seven. When he dances, he's all arms. His legs are like arms. Once he begins to speak, however, his motor burps. His monologues are gawky, ingenuous, like the opening remarks of the guest hosts on "Saturday Night Live." (Which shouldn't surprise, since the show's producer is "S.N.L." 's Lorne Michaels, who picked Conan out of a chiffon swirl of ingénues.) Puttering at his desk, O'Brien sits oddly aslant from his guests, his left side forming a solid abutment. A writer by vocation, O'Brien doesn't have the broadcast experience or the knack to get jazzy byplay going. When the interview hits a snag, it's like watching a loser on a bad date, digging himself a deeper hole. He gets whiny. When he chatted with the actress Daphne Zuniga, part of the time was spent discussing how going-nowhere the interview was. "Oh, come on, this is enjoyable," O'Brien protested before asking that irresistible question "Was Rob Reiner fun to work with?"

He does try to add a little depth, as they say in Hollywood. One night, his distinguished guest was David Halberstam, the judicious, noble-jawed author of "The Fifties." Exhausted by his efforts to free the slaves and preserve the Union, Halberstam lowered himself into the chair and launched into an Ice Age account of how Elvis was booked on the



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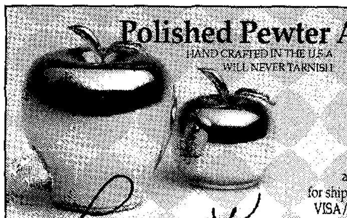

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Ed Sullivan show. The earth began to open. Halberstam's delivery was so ponderous that for the first time in my thirty years of watching talk shows (I would sneak over to Alan Dunn's house to watch Steve Allen), I could hear people *coughing* in the studio, like an audience at a bad play. An interview with another Ancient Mariner, Gore Vidal, was interrupted by a visit from Conan's make-believe next-door neighbor. Even more than Leno's "Tonight," O'Brien's "Late Night" jitters with distractions—a Greek chorus of dumb guys doing variations on Conan's name ("Conan the—veterinarian"), visits from a Bruce Springsteen impostor and the late William Howard Taft, taped remotes, more funny phone calls, Irish tunes not so much sung as gargled. Thus far, O'Brien's show is a junior version of Letterman's—"Late Night Lite." But the writing can be clever, and I don't mind O'Brien's much picked-on sidekick, Andy Richter. There's something sweet about how he tries to help.

IT'S a patriarchal contest being played out on late night. With Johnny Carson standing aloof as the Absent Father, we have David Letterman (born 1947) as the oldest son, the one who feels the prerogative; Jay Leno, the middle son (born 1950), puzzled that he isn't the favorite; and Conan O'Brien (born 1963), the youngest, mimicking the oldest brother, just wanting to be included. At first glance, Chevy Chase wouldn't seem to fit into this chart. Yet Chase is the host most openly, acutely imitative of Carson himself. An original alumnus of "S.N.L.," the star of the "Fletch" and "National Lampoon's Vacation" films, Chase belongs to a poker club that includes Neil Simon, Steve Martin, and Carson. Between shuffles, he must have studied Carson's every sandpapery move. Behind the desk in the Hollywood studio that once housed Ed McMahon's "Star Search," Chase leans in his chair, yanks his head, tugs on his ear, and scratches his nose like Carson; he even blinks like him. He blinks a lot on his show, as if trying to tell himself that this is all a terrible dream.

For catastrophe buffs, Fox's "The Chevy Chase Show" is a godsend equal to the Jerry Lewis telethon—a crackup for the ages. Once in a lifetime does show biz contain this much psycho-

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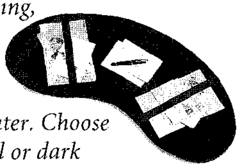

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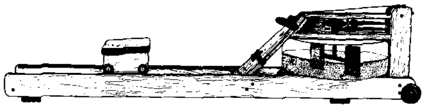

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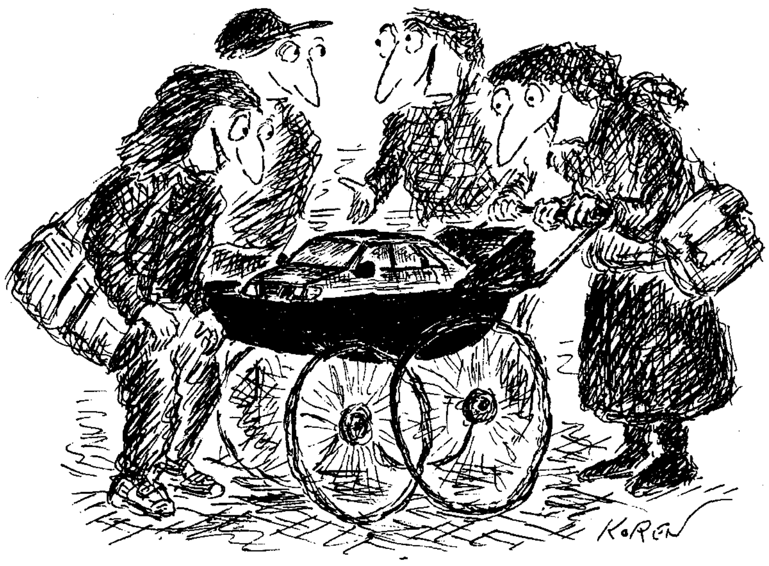
drama. The flubs, cheesy insults, stutter-step conversations ("You talk," "No, you talk"), gross slapstick (spewing vomit, drooling blood), insincere flattery, and wounded sulks are all rolled into one time bomb. The impending doom holds you fast. You can't watch, and yet you can't not watch. Every show yields a fresh wince. When a fan asked what color underwear he wore, Chase answered, "My underwear changes color, depending on what I had for lunch. In fact, right now I think I'm wearing Rocky Road." Beverly D'Angelo pretended to snore during her interview. During a dull stretch in his interview, Ron Silver asked the audience, "Does anyone have a newspaper I can read?"

It is, of course, wrong to revel in someone's misfortune. Yet what's oddly heartwarming about this fiasco is that it was so clearly in the wind. It restores your faith in fate. After Fox announced it had signed Chevy Chase to host a late-night talk show, many media experts issued the same caveats about Chase: scant interviewing experience, rusty physical skills, stuck-up attitude, beady eyes. Fox's stock answer was that he had Q ratings up there with the gods. (The Q ratings measure a performer's likability.) The show's high ratings its first night justified such faith in numbers. But a strong recognition factor couldn't paint over the flaws in Chase's persona, a persona that wasn't even totally his. The posters for "The Chevy Chase Show" featured Chase with a fake gap in his teeth, a takeoff on Letterman.

Aside from Arsenio Hall, trying to rally the faithful few, all the talk-show hosts are copying Letterman. There's an overlapping quality to late-night now. The guests are in quick rotation. The reclusive Robert De Niro appears with Jay, then with Chevy. The more available Jamie Lee Curtis, looking like one of those scary nymphos in "Shock Corridor," plugs her children's book on Jay, Chevy, and Conan. It isn't just the whirling Rolodex that makes these shows seem same-ish; it's the pervasive boyishness of the programs. Late-night has become the newest American device to prolong adolescence. So much frivolity. On those evenings when I'm feeling virtuous, I find myself returning to PBS's "Charlie Rose," where at least there are adults present. ♦



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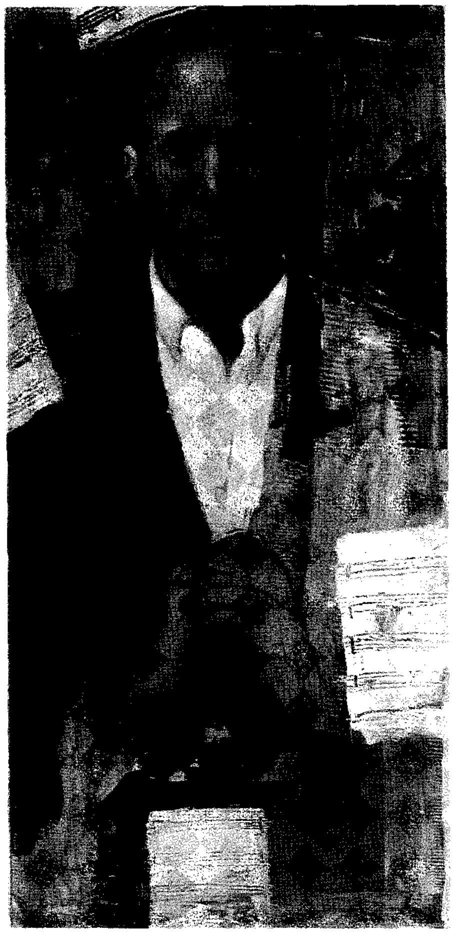
MUSICAL EVENTS

DREAMING A SYMPHONY

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

NEVER mind the physical strains of being sixty-seven years old, Hans Werner Henze was in buoyant mood. Despite a wrist injury, he'd got his new symphony written. Now here he was in Symphony Hall, Boston, doing his utmost to disregard a damaged knee, marching down the aisle without his stick to acknowledge the applause for that symphony's first performance, by Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony, at the beginning of this month. The spectacle was that of a man still robustly upright in his bearing: in the dark three-piece suit and bow tie he chose for his première, he looked like a count, or the director of a *Gymnasium*. And the formal attire set off the pushing energy of his head, a head that seems to have been not only baldened but dynamized by time, so that it's now a vigorous egg of flesh, fronted by a muscle of a face.

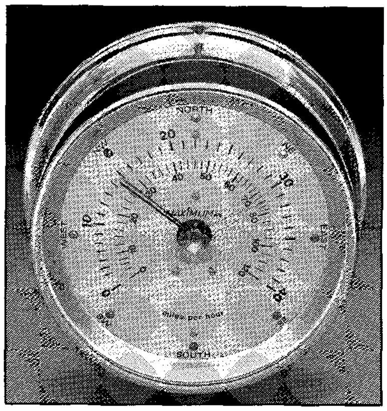


Hans Werner Henze's Eighth Symphony is a musical interpretation of images and episodes from "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

TIM BOWER

As is the physical appearance, so is the music: thoroughly groomed, making a proud show of the most conventional dress, and bursting with being. The bulging catalogue tells the same story of capability. One could build a whole orchestral season out of Mr. Henze's works—symphonies (the Boston commission is No. 8), concertos, and other pieces—or a whole opera season out of what he's produced for the stage. He is, in everything, the complete professional, fulfilling those nineteenth-century demands of form and genre which continue to rule our concert and operatic life. Or, to view the case another way, his music is comfortable with the world in which it has to live. Even his exercises in music theatre and his other efforts at confrontation, written when he had a rush of revolutionary blood, in his forties, belong to the same pattern, reflecting a momentary imposture of liberalism at the time in the dominant culture. And the long-standing unease of his relationship with his native Germany—a complex affair of repudiation and love on both sides—hasn't kept his music off the schedules of German concert halls and opera houses.

His success has inevitably been accompanied by charges of opportunism, and by unflattering comparisons with Richard Strauss, both composers being presumed to have gone some way with musical progress (Strauss as far as "Elektra," Mr. Henze perhaps as far as his Second String Quartet, written in 1952) and then jumped off in favor of pleasing the audience: hence "Der Rosenkavalier" or, in Mr. Henze's case, "König Hirsch," the lush fantastical opera he wrote following his permanent move from Germany to



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Italy. But this is too simple a picture of Strauss's course, and much too simple a one of Mr. Henze's. His participation in the postwar avant-garde was never more than a brief encounter; he was, from the first, set on the career he has kept to, and there are heady things among the works he wrote before his flight to the Mediterranean—things such as his Third Symphony, of 1949-50. Nor could one easily maintain that composers who kept faith with the European avant-garde through the fifties and sixties—Pierre Boulez, for instance—were therefore spurned by the cultural institutions to which Mr. Henze is presumed to have prostituted himself.

Undeniably, Mr. Henze's music is imbued with a wish to please, and very often a wish to please in ways that have pleased before: his almost erotic way of teasing and tempting the ear is an abiding trait one may find either enchanting or supine. But his artistic motivations are more easily understood as matters of personal choice and disposition than as tactics to gain influence and reward. In particular, his difference with the avant-garde was a dispute not about the audience but about the nature of music. At a time when composers were discovering that the substance of their art is notes, sounds, lines, planes, Mr. Henze stayed resolute that music was constituted of melodies and feelings. He was a Romantic—the last of the Romantics, one might have said, until the overflow of the past two decades. But he had learned enough from Stravinsky to know that the Romanticism he wanted—the nineteenth-century Romanticism of Schubert, Weber, and Schumann, of Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi—was over. Besides, Romanticism was for him, as it was for so many Romantics of the nineteenth century, a frustrated longing for a presumed Classical perfection, so that he was doubly distanced from the objects of his desire. In such circumstances, what could he do but dream?

Hence the atmosphere of prevarication and play, the apprized unreality, in so much of Mr. Henze's music, which differs from that of younger would-be Romantics not only in sheer expertise but also in the awareness that there is something hopeless and helpless in the yearning to compose as before. There are moments when Mr. Henze seems to be protesting against his predicament, though only to find that even protest is permitted within the rules of the dream game. Many such moments came in his politically engaged scores of the late sixties and early seventies; another arrived in the symphony preceding this Boston one—the Seventh, written in 1983-84 for the Berlin Philharmonic. But much more frequent are the sweeter dreams, in which he reconvenes the forces of music past, and contrives pleasures that are also, because these are only dreams, sadnesses.

His fluency in doing so is matched by his self-consciousness: he suffers no illusions about musical history or his own place in it. "Old forms appear to me as Classical ideals of beauty," he has written, "no longer attainable but still visible from a great distance, arousing memories like dreams." Or, again—though this was in a spirit of self-criticism at the time of his symphony for Cuba—there is his description of his earlier music's qualities of "nostalgia and skepticism." Nostalgia is the mode of a man dreaming up the past; skepticism is the reaction he must have when he knows himself to be dreaming, when he places his dreams before us not in any Berliozian way, as actuality, but in the dream light of his harmonic and orchestral sophistication. Mr. Henze's only mistake was ever to assume he could break out from this circle, since nostalgia and skepticism were still the overriding characteristics of his revolutionary music, as in "El Cimarrón," a concert-length piece he wrote in 1969-70 for baritone and three instrumental players. Here the memoirs of a runaway slave engender not so much a mirror of present abrasions and contempts as a hallowed image, communicating the message—profoundly welcome in a middle-class culture—that the only good or necessary or achievable revolutions are all in the past. "Back then . . .," the work begins. With his opera "We Come to the River," produced in 1976, he brought this period of idealized political combat to a climax and a close, and his later music has been a return, though with increased range and richness, to earlier ways of dreaming.

His new symphony is not only a dream but the dream of a dream: the dream of, specifically, "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Undaunted by Men-

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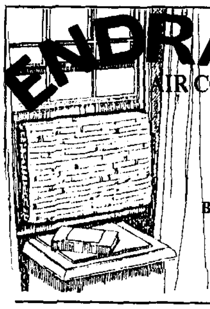

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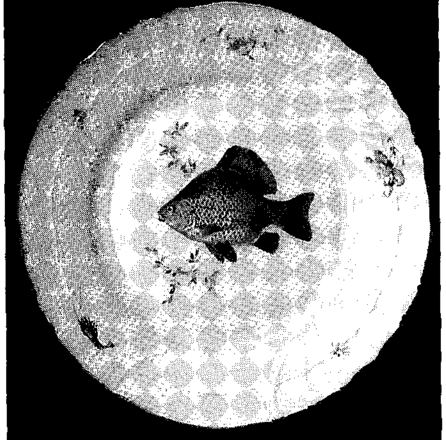
delssohn or Britten—or, indeed, by his own "Royal Winter Music," for guitar, a set of portraits from Shakespeare that included sketches of Oberon and of Bottom in his own dream—he presents us with three movements that are musical interpretations of images and episodes in the play. Perhaps disregard of obvious predecessors is a symptom of the dreamer, who exists in an imaginary world that includes only him and the object of his dreams. Another such symptom would be Mr. Henze's frequent recourse to literary models—librettos, poems, plays, histories—that give him something to dream about.

The first movement refers to Puck's line "I'll put a girdle round about the earth/In forty minutes," spoken as he leaves to fetch Oberon the magic flower. "Well," Mr. Henze wrote in a letter to his conductor, "I composed this girdle"—though it takes not forty minutes but only the few of Puck's absence in the play. As so often in Mr. Henze's music, and particularly in his later scores, a highly enriched tonal harmony allows him to proceed at two speeds simultaneously, so that in this case the fleetness of Puck's orbit is conveyed in a soft presto of flickering scales over slow song strains in other parts of the orchestra. Equally characteristic is the way one texture, one passage of movement, begins before the last is quite over, rendering a journey that goes in overlapping stages and suavely maintains momentum through opalescent plays of color. Apart from suggesting fast and weightless travel, the music also implies a Puck remembering what he has just heard from Oberon. The instrumental singing, going on under the waves of speed, is perhaps that of the "mermaid on a dolphin's back/Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath/That the rude sea grew civil at her song"; and the movement's climax, according to the composer, is the noise of "Cupid's fiery shaft/Quench'd in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon," with the words' sexual imagery made explicit as rising trumpet calls are enveloped in reiterated fortissimos. Finally comes Puck's offering of the flower, which Mr. Henze conjures as a gift to his orchestra and his audience: a slowly unfolding chord for muted strings.

After this, we jump to the scene be-



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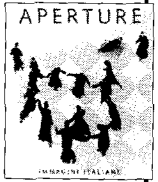

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tween the flower-drugged Titania and the ass-headed Bottom, their discourse presented as a dialogue of two very different kinds of music. Bottom begins the show with a galumphingly grotesque Latin-American dance, heftily syncopated and making much use of the orchestral heavyweights. Titania wakes, and sings an aria on violins that begins gently but soon becomes passionate, to which Bottom responds with a canzonetta on trombone. From this point, the conversation of folly proceeds, mostly in Bottom's rumba or tango, though with interventions of Titanian song and dance for an orchestra predominantly of strings, and with each kind of music seeming to reflect the pertinent character's image of the beloved. It's all great fun; the movement could even make it into the pops-concert repertory. But, if one forgets for a moment the Shakespearean program, the sound of ugliness at once glorying in itself and enraged is disquieting. Bottom becomes ever more enthusiastic, and the movement ends, as it must, with a bang.

The finale is an adagio that, in the composer's words, "has something to do with the peaceful and gentle and lovely epilogue of the play," and peaceful and gentle and lovely it duly is. The exquisite extension of the main material is broken off several times, as if the music wanted to visit other possibilities—other pools, featuring small groups of woodwinds with harp—but then it goes on, reaching toward the high equipoise of the final chord, which is again luminously scored for muted strings. "And this weak and *idle theme,/No more yielding* but a dream."

Mr. Henze's only other symphony for an American orchestra—his Fifth, written for Leonard Bernstein and the Philharmonic in 1962—had more of an American sound and feel than this new one has. (However, his statements about No. 5 have been contradictory, sometimes invoking "Manhattan, mon amour," sometimes "the sensuous happiness of 20th-century Rome.") No. 8 is—at least, in the movements around the central comedy—altogether more serene and softer: music of silks, requiring care in balance and refined solo playing. Mr. Ozawa and his orchestra presented it expertly; they bring it to Fisher Hall this week.

In its three-movement form and its under-half-hour duration, the Eighth Symphony makes a return to the design Mr. Henze preferred in earlier symphonies, as if slimmed dimensions would enable him to slip out from under the yoke of German symphonic history. Beethoven, plainly, doesn't appeal. Mr. Henze, being essentially a lyric composer, would rather sing than argue; being an artist of nostalgia, he couldn't be expected to sympathize with a musician whom history has made into a symbol of challenge and self-determination. In that respect, his Seventh Symphony was an anomaly, being on the Beethovenian scale of four movements playing for close to forty minutes; and, by happy chance, a magnificent first recording of this anomaly, by Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (EMI CDC 754762 2), comes along just as the new symphony is having its first performances.

"My Seventh Symphony," Mr. Henze tells us, "is a German symphony, and it deals with matters German." (His ironic portentousness is characteristic, an indication of the man who cherishes no fantasies about himself.) He goes on to remark how the first movement is a German dance, an allemande, and how the last is "an orchestral setting" of a Hölderlin poem: again the dream object from literature. Again, too, there is the dreamer's solitariness, for in what is perhaps an unconscious chain of thought he sees the slow movement as "a kind of funeral ode, a song of lamentation, a monologue." What he doesn't say is that each of the four movements ends with the shattering arrival of aggressive, repetitive march music, *of ruthless force* that grows blacker each time. That was the nightmare; afterward comes the dream. ♦

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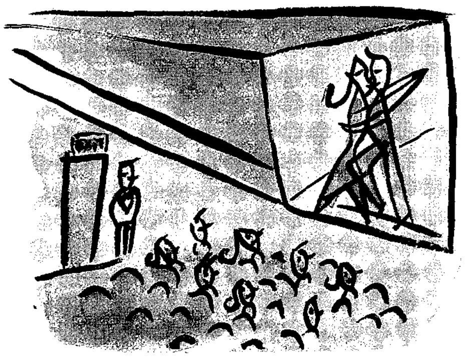
THE CURRENT CINEMA

DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE

BY ANTHONY LANE

"MALICE" is a pretty dumb title for a thriller. It's like calling a Deanna Durbin movie "Nice." As things turn out, the title is a perfect fit: the whole movie gets by on a blurry halo of menace. Written by Aaron Sorkin and Scott Frank, and directed by Harold Becker, it stars Bill Pullman as Andy Safian—the associate dean of a women's college, a soft touch in corduroy, who lives with his wife, Tracy (Nicole Kidman), in a creaky Victorian house. In an effort to raise cash for new plumbing, they take in a tenant. Honestly, haven't these people been to the movies recently? Did nobody tell them about "Single White Female" and "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle"? Don't they realize that the greatest peril now facing Western culture is the lodger?


SANTIAGO COHEN

In this case, it's the hand that wields the scalpel—a smart young surgeon named Jed Hill (Alec Baldwin), whose knack of appearing in doorways without warning suggests that he may just be the villain of the piece. His idea of a quiet evening, and a fail-safe way to annoy the Safians, is to bring back a nurse and screw her to the strains of Bryan Ferry's "Slave to Love." One evening, he is called to operate on Tracy, who is stricken with severe abdominal pains—they must be severe, because Jerry Goldsmith's otherwise toothless music takes on a scary bite, as if she were threatened not from inside but by someone climbing through the window with a meat hook. Backed by Andy, Jed makes a snap decision to remove both ovaries. It then emerges that only one of them was damaged, and that Tracy has been needlessly shorn of the chance to bear children. Oops.

This is a serious matter, and "Malice" occasionally feigns interest in medical ethics and other lofty concerns, but in truth it's absurdly offhand about human suffering. The action begins with a rape, then graduates to murder—investigated by Bebe Neuwirth, as the local detective—but it soon becomes apparent that this barely qualifies as a subplot; its only possible purpose, as far as I could see, was to provide a logical occasion for Andy (a suspect, though not a serious one) to come up with a sperm sample. Why not just give him a warm test tube and a biography of Ava Gardner and let him get on with it? When the attacker is caught, that part of the story dies, and his victims drop out of sight. Somewhere at the back of all this, there is real cut-price nastiness: sexual violence is nothing special, the movie implies, so here's a new variation—sexual violence as a red herring. In Becker's best movie, "Sea of Love," the narrative foreground matched the backdrop: whoever was committing murder, you knew that it was caused by the same fear and trembling that brought Al Pacino and Ellen Barkin together for their horny, panic-stricken jousts. By comparison, the characters in "Malice" are like an afterthought, drafted in once a decision has been reached on the principal crimes, all of which feel stuck on rather than lived through: a puddle of blood, a hedge of deceit, a blob of rape. For the first hour, the movie refuses to budge; it just sits and glows.

The true hero of the picture is the cinematographer, Gordon Willis, but he's too good for it. If you watch a lot of movies, you will (though you may not know it) be steeped in Willis's art. In the first two "Godfather" films, the pairing of light and shade moved far beyond the need for harmony; however exquisitely framed, it became an ominous contest, and Willis led Coppola's search for a perverse new iconography, in which dark-

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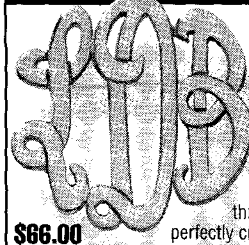

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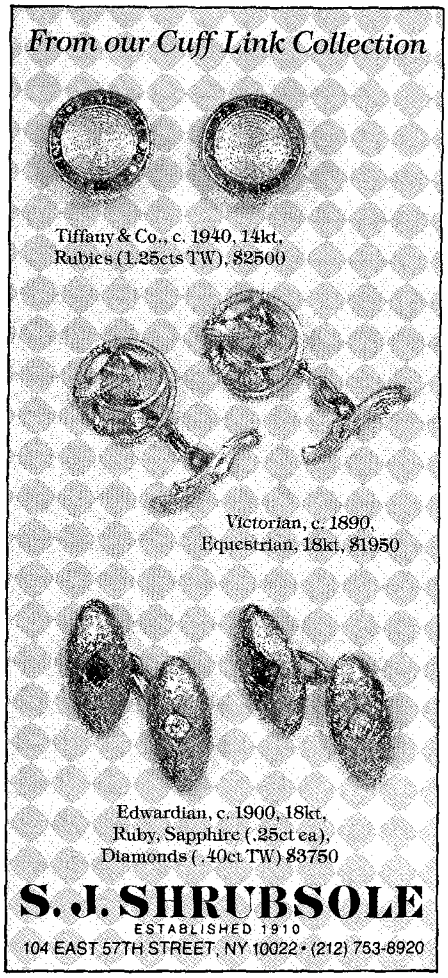

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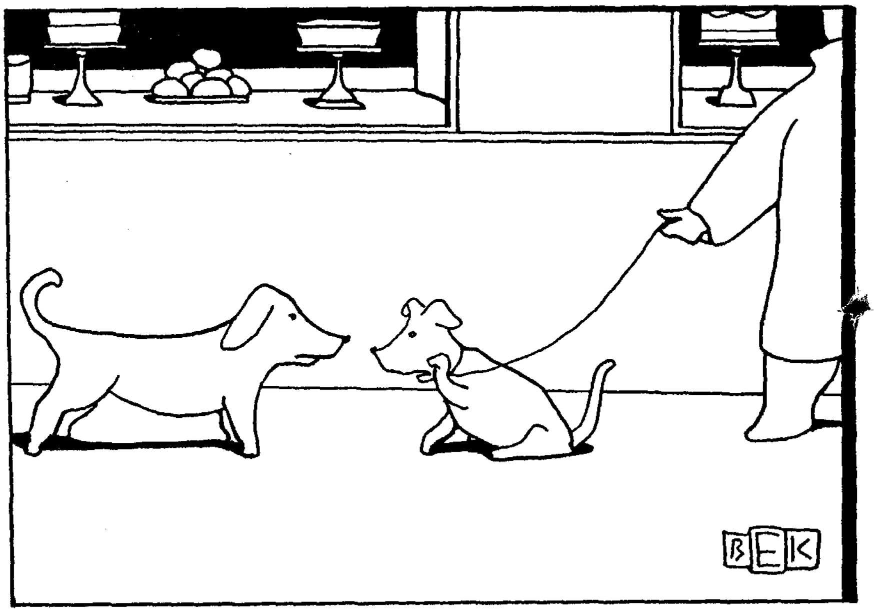
ness would become a source of strength, a Corleone refuge from the dangers of the day. Later, Willis shot "Manhattan," where some of that uncertainty lingered on, the monochrome vistas split between elegy and celebration. Was Woody Allen weeping over his city or whooping it up? Willis gave him a warm, dark place in which to breed his neuroses, a comic hobby that for the first time began to look suave instead of frazzled. Add "Klute," "The Parallax View," and "All the President's Men," and you begin to see that Willis has produced as coherent a body of work as anyone—any writer, director, star—in modern Hollywood. (That he has never won an Oscar is yet more evidence, if any were needed, of the fumbling injustice of the awards.) But even he cannot shine in a damp climate, and "Malice," like "Presumed Innocent," makes dismaying viewing, because it gives him nothing to chew on. His camera picks out ambiguities that just aren't there in the script; far from enriching it, they seem to float around and get in the way—smoke in your eyes. When Tracy comes back late one night, we see a blue-gray ghost watching from the window; it should be a shivery sight, looming and vanishing like that, but it's only Andy waiting up for his wife. When she kisses someone goodbye, we can't quite make the guy out: he's a rim-lit silhouette. But in the following scene he is named and discussed; secrecy was not an issue, in other words—more a trick of Willis's fancy. He wants "Malice" to be a shadowland, populated by Deep Throats, but the movie is little more than a string of twists, and his flattery gets it nowhere.

"Malice" tries hard to take you for a ride but never quite leads you astray. Once Tracy has claimed twenty million dollars in compensation and walked out on the hapless Andy, there's only one path for the tale to follow. You could say the same of "Double Indemnity," but in that case it was Barbara Stanwyck who took the hero by the hand, or worse, and dragged him down the path. Nicole Kidman is not in the same league, not even playing the same game. She clenches her junior jaw and looks miffed or decisive, as the mood demands, but there's nothing to lure us on; the only charged-up thing about her is her ha[illegible] which, as usual, appears to have been styled during an electrical storm. Where Stanwyck forced the issue of the plot, Kidman somehow lets it happen, revealing it for the desperate contrivance it is. Oddly enough, this fault could have been cured by a simple casting switch: her role could have gone to Bebe Neuwirth, who has the ideal brand of wry, forties sexiness, and Kidman could have played the gritty cop. Well, sort of.

It's up to Alec Baldwin, then, to save a sinking ship, or at least make it go down in grand fashion. I'm not convinced that Baldwin can really act, but it doesn't matter, because he can do something more important: he can put on a good show. He understands that a movie's craving for style will always outstrip its sense of responsibility, no matter what the director has in mind; something in the medium—



"I'd love to, but I live with someone."

its sheen and pace—loves to kick against ideas, and it tends to be those in front of the camera, in the lap of its luxurious attention, who are keenest to join the attack. Baldwin acts vain, but you don't begrudge him his vanity, because he knows that it's only skin-deep, or emulsion-thin; he's the opposite of Tom Cruise, who likes to check his chipmunk expressions with a sudden frown, as if to say, "No, but seriously now . . ." Cruise makes a hopeless star, because he remains suspicious of good clean fun and absolutely terrified of the dirty kind. Baldwin can't get enough of it: he wipes his hair back and pushes his lines out as if onto a catwalk; remember the swanky, ball-busting speech that Mamet wrote for him at the start of "Glengarry Glen Ross"? It's a shame we no longer have the kind of wicked, vinegary directors who could put him to best use.

In "Malice" you can feel him grabbing at the Jed Hill role, shaking it for ripe moments, but they don't begin to drop until halfway through the movie, when Jed is under siege for malpractice. This is right up his alley: having his back to the wall means the chance for a good scratch. Accused of divine arrogance, he winds himself up and spits, "You ask me if I have a God complex? Let me tell you something: I *am* God." The audience goes crazy at this glamorous nonsense, and no wonder: it's the movie equivalent of smashing your guitar over the drummer's head. It fits into an honorable noir tradition that the silliest writing should be reserved for the highest drama—Welles' lip-smacking finales to "Touch of Evil" and "The Lady from Shanghai," for example. Baldwin's manifest enjoyment of the scene gets to the other actors—it cheers them up and gives the picture a fresh spin, which bowls it along to the end. Once you cease to believe in anything that happens, the relief is overwhelming—there's no longer any doubt that you're watching hokum. The ingredients tumble into place: a rainstorm, a house on the cliffs, lines like "Nobody wants nothing" and "I'm running the show now," and—a real clincher—a cameo part for Anne Bancroft. Collectors of kitsch will also treasure the moment when Nicole Kidman lies down naked on a bed, squeals in pain, and jumps up with a syringe stuck in her back. Shortly afterward, we hear the line "It's the here and the now and the needle in the haystack." Come on, she's not *that* big. ♦

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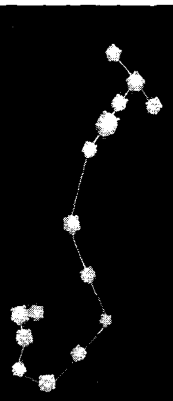

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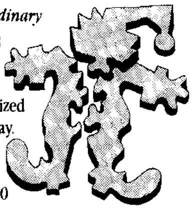

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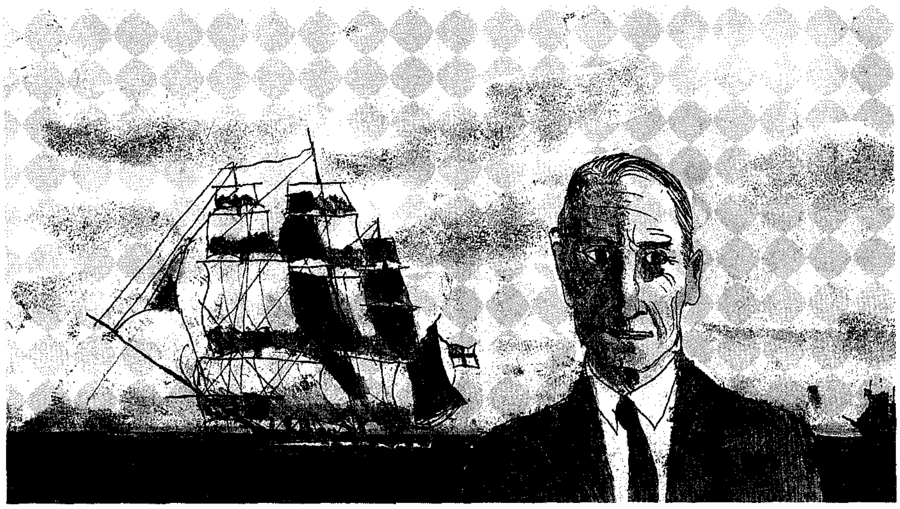

Patrick O'Brian's "The Wine-Dark Sea" is the sixteenth of the Jack Aubrey novels, an epic series that defies categorization.

To the surprise of no one who has read a few of them, the Jack Aubrey novels of Patrick O'Brian have at last caught on in this country. They've become a cult, in fact. Norton has printed forty thousand copies of the latest, "The Wine-Dark Sea" ($22), which will be out at the end of the month, and its catch-up program of publishing four early Aubrey books a year in paperback, often along with a newer one in hardcover, is now complete: all sixteen are in print, some half a million copies in all. The newfound commercial success of the series has actually come as a disappointment to some O'Brian fans I know, who feel that their secret has been devalued by being so widely disseminated, and in other quarters it has even prompted a backlash: a suspicion that these novels—just sea stories, after all—can't possibly be *that* good. And ever since O'Brian's last book, the uncharacteristically pallid "The Truelove," there has been lurking, in some anxious corners of the cult, a fear that the Master, who is nearly eighty, had begun to lose it, and that the series, which began appearing in England in 1970, was sailing into the doldrums.

Those glum thoughts can now be put to rest. "The Wine-Dark Sea" is a happy return to form. It starts with a volcanic eruption in the middle of the ocean; includes a memorable three-way battle between a British frigate, a four-masted pirate ship, and an American privateer, complete with grappling, boarding, and bloody hand-to-hand combat; takes one of its main characters on a frostbitten expedition into the Andes, while another, exhausted and dehydrated, is buffeted for days in an open launch; and pauses along the way to consider both Rousseau's social philosophy and the "Viennese" method of treating venereal disease. In other words, it's classic O'Brian.

This particular genre is not easily described, and a difficulty in categorization may partly account for Americans' tardy appreciation of the series. Short of summarizing them, it's hard to convey what these books are like. They're exhaustively researched historical novels of the Napoleonic Wars. They're also classic examples of the English comedy of manners. They're swashbuckling sea yarns, inspired in part by C. S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower series. And they're novels about love and friendship—the longest fictional investigation of male bonding since the Hardy boys. They're funny, they're exciting, they're informative. And there are a *lot* of

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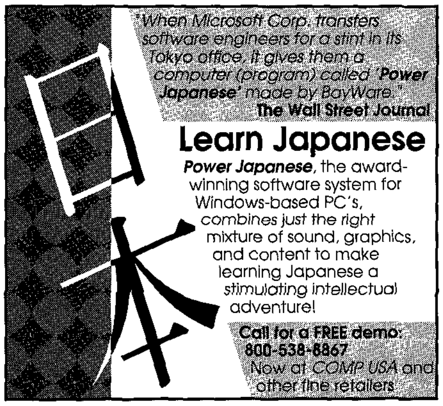

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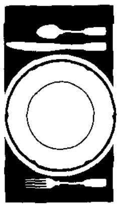

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them—they're a practically inexhaustible resource. They're the masculine answer to the Georgette Heyer Regency romances.

New recruits to the Aubrean Navy should probably begin with "Master and Commander" and then "Post Captain," the first two volumes in the series, but after that the order you read them in doesn't much matter. The sixteen novels are really one epic, unfinished work, extending from 1800 until (so far) 1814, and traipsing over most of the globe, from the Mediterranean to England and on to the South Seas, Australia, America, France, Scandinavia, and South America. Certain plot threads and characters recur from book to book—most notably the hero, Jack Aubrey, who is a captain in the Royal Navy, and his "particular friend" Stephen Maturin, a physician, natural scientist, and the author of the essential tracts "Tar-Water Reconsidered" and "Thoughts on the Prevention of Diseases Most Usual Among Seamen." But other characters and themes drop out for volumes at a time, and the reader can dip in at almost any point.

O'Brian ignores, or shunts to the background, the ever-shifting international politics of the Napoleonic era—it takes so long to get news at sea that Jack is sometimes uncertain whom he is supposed to be fighting—and focusses on issues of more immediate importance to his characters, such as the struggle for Catalan independence or the endless seesawing between Whigs and Tories back in England. Each volume creates its own, more or less self-contained stretch of narrative time, but this is often interrupted—just as life is—by people unexpectedly turning up from years before, or by minor characters suddenly becoming major, and vice versa. "The Wine-Dark Sea," for example, features surprise appearances by both Jack's young half brother (the offspring of an ill-considered alliance between Jack's troublesome father and a dairymaid) and Jack's half-Bantu illegitimate son, Sam Panda (now a Catholic priest, of all things); and it gives a brief star turn to Nathaniel Martin, a dreary one-eyed parson, whose previous role has been to accompany Stephen on botanizing expeditions and generally to get on everyone's nerves, but who now comes down with a violent case of psychosomatic syphilis (contracted by lusting in the heart, not in the flesh) and wastes away in spectacular fashion.

JACK AUBREY and Stephen Maturin first meet, in Volume I, in a music room on Minorca; they nearly come to blows when Jack beats time too enthusiastically to Locatelli's C-Major Quartet, but then agree to ship out together. For the next five thousand-odd pages, they are virtually never apart, and their relationship eventually comes to resemble a fond, familiar marriage. The two men, it almost goes without saying, couldn't be less alike. Jack is big (six feet and sixteen stone, which for the early nineteenth century was practically steroidal), bluff, horny, and impulsive. And not terribly bright; his main talent is for fighting battles at sea—an ability that has earned him several fortunes and the nickname Lucky Jack. He could be an oversized, less-decorated Lord Nelson—whom Jack idolizes, both for his daring and for his handsome table manners—except that he's less vain and still has all his limbs. (He's been wounded so often, though, that his body is stitched together like a quilt, and in the new book he suffers a few more fearsome blows.) Jack is also—in a typical O'Brian allusion—a kind of anti-version of Forester's Hornblower, who is small, dark, riven by insecurity and self-doubt, unhappy in his first marriage, and tone-deaf, while Jack is tall, fair, supremely self-confident, blissfully wed (as of the fourth volume), and, unaccountably, a more than passable violinist, able to scrape through a Boccherini sonata even in a gale.

Stephen, the illegitimate son of an Irish officer and a Catalan gentlewoman, is tiny, saturnine, and gifted at just about everything—music, languages, botany, philosophy, and medicine, to list just his most obvious accomplishments. In his capacity as ship's physician, he treats countless cases of constipation and V.D. and performs astounding surgical feats—trepanning skulls, removing splinters from testicles, and once, with the help of a mirror and a homemade surgical instrument, managing to extract a bullet from near his own heart. Based in part on the great eighteenth-century naturalist Sir Joseph Banks (of whom O'Brian has written a lively and unusual biography, recently published in this country by Godine)

Stephen is at once the series' most authentic piece of period re-creation—a quintessential man of the Enlightenment—and, in disguise, the voice of modernity: O'Brian's way of commenting on his own work. It's as if Stephen had happened into Aubrey's world after a prolonged stay in our own. He has a modern problem with substance abuse, for example. (Having, a few volumes back, kicked a heavy laudanum habit, he now, in this latest installment, rediscovers the soothing powers of Peruvian coca leaves.) And he has a thoroughly modern view of sex and marriage, and a liberal—even radical—social and political philosophy. Unlike everyone else on board, Stephen *thinks*, and in "The Wine-Dark Sea" he passes more than one sleepless night swaying in his hammock and brooding on the unreliability of the human condition:

> He had known it often enough. A delightful child, even a delightful early adolescent, interested in everything, alive, affectionate, would turn into a thick, heavy, stupid brute and never recover: ageing men would become wholly self-centred, indifferent to those who had been their friends, avaricious. Yet apart from the very strong, very ugly passions arising from inheritance or political disagreement he had not known it in men neither young nor old. He swung, and thought, his mind wandering free, sometimes to the allied but quite distinct subject of inconstancy in love.

Stephen is also the source of much of the books' humor—wittingly, through puns and practical jokes, and unwittingly, through pratfalls and a kind of unworldly innocence. Even after sixteen volumes, Stephen is still a lubber, who, in one of O'Brian's running gags, falls overboard at least once a voyage and is always in need—not unlike the brand-new reader—of having the difference between the royals and the topgallants explained to him. There's a sail diagram in the front of each volume, but it's less necessary than one might think. O'Brian makes a point of using old-fashioned naval lingo—"larboard" and "wearing ship" and "weather gage"—but he always provides some contextual clue. Or almost always. For years, I've been trying to figure out what "cross-catharpins" and "Bentinck shrouds" are, and the new book introduces yet another riddle: the "dumb-chalder," whatever that is. Oddly, this obscurity is a pleasure; it puts you aboard, so to speak, and sug-

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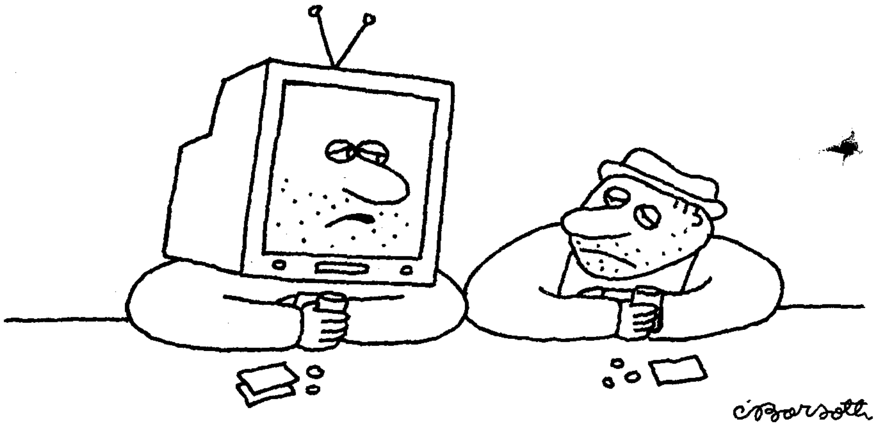
gests that in due course you, too, will have learned the ropes.

IN one of the early volumes, Jack and Stephen fall for the same woman, the romantic adventuress Diana Villiers, and almost kill each other over her. Ultimately, Stephen wins—or marries Diana, after a fashion, while Jack happily turns to her homelier cousin Sophie—and their friendship after that is largely uncomplicated, consisting less of high drama than an accumulation of small, quotidian moments: bird-watching from the crosstrees, impromptu string duets in Jack's cabin, dinners of lobscouse or soused hog's face in the officers' mess. Stephen and Jack often slightly misunderstand each other, since their areas of individual expertise are so different, and this makes each man a source of pleasure and discovery to the other—a desirable pattern, come to think of it, for any kind of extended friendship.

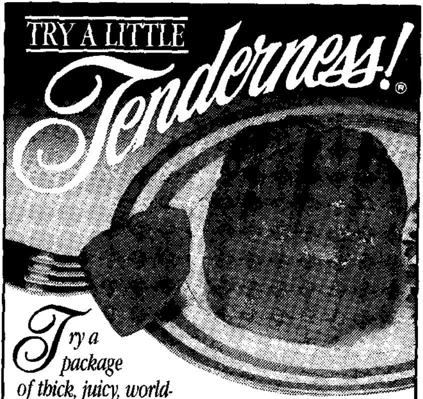
Something of this quotidian spirit pervades the novels as a whole. On the one hand, they are filled with adventure: storms, shipwrecks, plagues, torture, imprisonment, and thunderously vivid naval battles. (My favorite comes in the fifth volume, "Desolation Island," when the Leopard, a fifty-gun man-of-war under Jack's command, is stalked for days over gale-tossed Antarctic seas by the colossal Waakzaamheid, a seventy-four-gun Dutch ship of the line; the two vessels time their cannon fire with the crests of mountainous waves and then slide, decks awash, down into the troughs, where they're invisible to each other.) But the Aubrey novels also drift along for protracted stretches during which nothing much happens; they're like real sea voyages. The stormy Waakzaamheid encounter takes place only toward the end of "Desolation Island," most of which is simply a lengthy description of a voyage to the Antipodes. Somehow, O'Brian replaces the traditional rhythms of the novel with the rhythms of sailing: the rising and setting of the sun, the swelling and falling of the wind, the day-after-day sameness, punctuated by the sudden, magical appearance of land or of another ship. His writing—at once contemporary and filled with echoes of Sterne and Austen—makes you aware that a "passage" in the literary sense can work in much the same way as a passage in the nautical one. Here, for example, is how a chapter opens early in the new book:

> A reluctant dawn, a dim blood-red sun; and although the sea was diminishing fa[illegible]t was still wilder than most sailors had ever seen, with bursting waves and a still-prodigious swell. A desolate ocean, grey now under a deathly white, rolling with enormous force, but still with no life upon it apart from these two ships, now dismasted and tossing like paper boats on a millstream. They were at some distance from one another, both apparently wrecks, floating but out of control: beyond them, to windward, a newly-arisen island of black rock and cinders. It no longer shot out fire, but every now and then, with an enormous shriek, a vast jet of steam leapt from the crater, mingled with ash and volcanic gases. When Jack first saw the island it was a hundred and eighty feet high, but the rollers had already swept away great quantities of the clinker and by the time the sun was clear of the murk not fifty feet remained.

O'Brian is particularly at home with shipboard rituals—the holystoning of decks at sunrise, the almost daily gunnery practice, the frequent formal dinners, the weekly rigging of the ship for church, the obligatory recital of the Articles of War, with their dire penalties for treason and for sodomy—and makes them as welcome and reassuring to the reader as they must have been to the sail-



"I wasn't cable-ready."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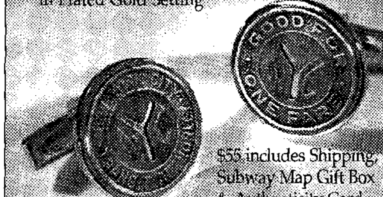
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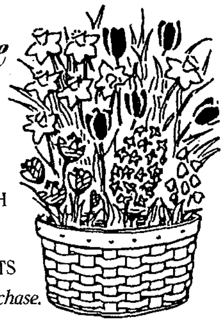
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ors. The dinners especially. Meals at sea observed an etiquette far more elaborate than any on land—for the officers and gentlemen, that is. The servants standing at attention, one behind each guest; the unrolling of the long white tablecloth; the presentation of the dishes by Jack's faithful, fretful steward, Killick; the drinking of countless toasts (Jack, being of the old school, makes a big production of bowing first): all this is recounted in loving detail. The conversation, depending on who's present and how much wine has been drunk, consists of formal drawing-room compliments or raucous jokes and witticisms or intimate, heartfelt exchanges. There are contests of poetic declamation; tall tales and battle yarns; debates on the nature of free will, on slavery, on passion, on which is superior, the land or the sea. These dinner parties, and the private feasts of port and toasted cheese shared by Stephen and Jack in Jack's cabin, are the very soul of the novels, and they cast a warm, companionable glow on the page no less than below deck.

BUT how good are these books, really? Non-initiates are understandably skeptical, suspecting some campy, literary in-joke on the part of the cult followers (whose ranks include Iris Murdoch, A. S. Byatt, and Ursula Le Guin). The truth, though, is that they're very good indeed—good enough so that you wish they were even better, and not quite so circumscribed. "The Wine-Dark Sea" ends with Jack and Stephen sailing for home, and with the reader as eager as they are to make a landfall. It's been four volumes since they last set foot in England, where they left behind not only Jack's growing family and Stephen's infant daughter but the rich novelistic material of life ashore: babies, gardens, money, politics, wives, parents. Early in the series, Jack occasionally finds himself without a command, and though his fortunes sink (he's reduced to half pay, and also has no chance to seize enemy ships, which were a sea captain's real source of wealth), these volumes bloom with variety and incident: balls and card parties right out of Austen, a fox hunt worthy of Trollope, midnight coach chases and endezvous reminiscent of Walter Scott. The later volumes attempt to relieve mo-otony at sea by involving Stephen in elaborate subplots full of secret agentry

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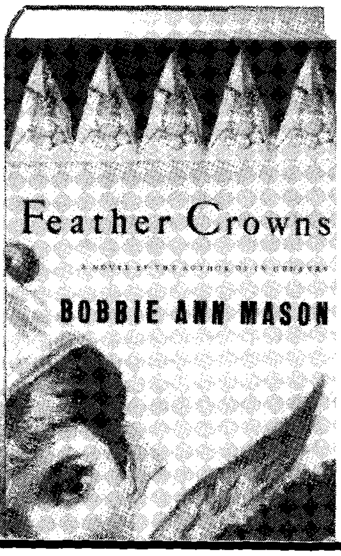

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and international intrigue, but the results are sometimes strained and far-fetched. And the books increasingly suffer from the sailor's age-old complaint: not enough women.

One eventually senses a kind of blandness, too, in the friendship between Jack and Stephen. It's not so much that nothing happens to test that friendship as that Jack and Stephen don't change. They're static, like the characters in a sitcom. Once in a while, they talk about how they're getting older, but the reader sees little evidence of it—in fact, there's not much growth or development over the whole series. Incidents just pile one on top of another, and the individual volumes don't so much end as stop—sometimes in medias res, sometimes in the middle of nowhere. (This is an issue that O'Brian himself seems to address, when Nathaniel Martin remarks toward the close of Volume XIV, "The Nutmeg of Consolation," that Laurence Sterne "did quite well" without endings, and that "there is at least one Mozart quartet that stops without the slightest ceremony: most satisfying when you get used to it.")

And there's a certain ship-in-the-bottle quality to the Aubrey books—an element of painstaking, microscopic re-creation undertaken simply to prove that it can be done. These aren't novels that use history to illuminate character, or character to illuminate history, but novels whose central impulse seems to lie in historical cloning—the literary equivalent of Mystic Seaport. They've been so fastidiously researched—from the letters and biographies of Nelson, Saumarez, and others; from the *Naval Chronicle*, a journal published throughout the Napoleonic period—that they dovetail almost irritatingly with the factual record. It's as if the author were challenging his readers to spot something inaccurate. In the end, though, despite his efforts toward total verisimilitude, O'Brian's version of life on board one of His Majesty's ships is a simplified and sanitized version of the real thing, which was a life of unimaginable squalor and cruelty, rife with flogging, drunkenness, pestilence, and homosexual predation. All these things turn up in the novels—even, at times, on Jack's own ship—but they're dealt with in an offhand, slightly apologetic fashion that makes them less horrific, and less ubiquitous, than in fact they were. The truth is that few people in their right mind would ever voluntarily sail before the mast in a nineteenth-century warship.

The Aubrey novels provide all the satisfactions—and all the limitations—of genre writing. They're formulaic in a way that's both predictable and reassuring: you can count on them to deliver the same pleasures over and over again. But what they almost never do is what truly great literature does—that is, disquiet you or threaten your preconceptions. All the same, there are legions of us who gladly ship out time and again under Captain Aubrey. That's the achievement of these books: they're escape reading in the best sense. They offer a complete immersion in an alternative world—a toy-like fantasy world but also a world dense with real, minutely observed particulars, usually delivered by Stephen, who in his guise as a naturalist is forever rowing off to deserted islands and beaches, studying and sketching the flora and fauna and, in many cases, bringing it back on board. (The list of pets that turn up at one time or another on Jack's ship reads like the manifest of Noah's ark: bees, a gibbon, tame rats, an aardvark, a *tortoise*, a golden retriever, a sloth. . . .)

"I give you joy, sir," Jack is apt to say, congratulating Stephen at the end of one of his botanizing expeditions. Jack and Stephen are *always* wishing each other joy—after a battle, before a meal, during a sunset. And joy is an animating principle of O'Brian's entire enterprise. The books take (and share) immense delight in the natural world—in examining things close at hand and in contemplating exotic, far-off vistas. They also suggest, infectiously, the pleasure that must have gone into their making. There are undoubtedly countless jokes and allusions here that will go forever unplumbed by anyone except O'Brian, and in every volume there's a passage that seems to have been included for no other reason than that the author thought it would be fun to try. (One that springs to mind is an outrageous episode in "Post Captain" in which Jack lumbers across the Pyrenees disguised in a bear suit.) O'Brian's primary aim, you feel, is to amuse Patrick O'Brian, and his Prospero-like presence can be sensed behind every sentence, as he indulges himself, as well as the reader, in the intricacy, exactness, and unlikeliness of this vast, miniature creation. ♦

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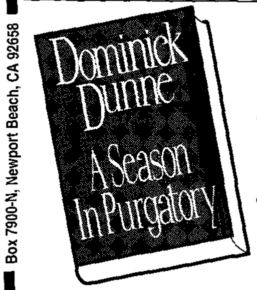

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BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

The Grisly Wife
by Rodney Hall
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $20)

A ROLLICKING shaggy-dog-style monologue—part murder mystery and part portraiture through poetry in the tradition of Browning—spoken by Catherine Byrne, a stalwart nineteenth-century missionary wife who lives in Australia. In response to a local policeman's inquiry about a homicide, Catherine tears through the tale of her whirlwind marriage, back in England, to a visionary cobbler—he started a holy community to which only women were admitted—with a speed and brilliance of diction that will delight the reader. Along with her man and his eight other "hidden stars," as he called his female disciples, the young bride sailed off to a life of hilarity and hardship in the wilderness Down Under. She suffered her husband's infidelities; carried a child that the jealous disciples believed would be the second "virgin birth"; befriended, after a fashion, the Aboriginal women who lived in the bush surrounding their austere compound; and managed not to die of consumption, though she came close. She ends up a frank and loquacious old woman, and her account is the making of a perfectly achieved comic novel.

GENERAL

The Culture of Disbelief
by Stephen L. Carter
(Basic; $25)

RATIONAL argument rarely seems as warm, as human, as it does in this book. Carter's subject is the trivialization of religion in America, which, he says, has been brought about not by pervasive shifts in the culture—according to polls, most Americans claim religious feeling of one kind or another—but by law and politics. Carter himself is a religionist, and also a legal scholar, and he argues for what he calls "epistemic diversity," which is to say freedom of motive as well as freedom of speech. Religion, he suggests, offers an essential counterpoint to he dominant coercions of the state, but t cannot do so if any argument urged rom religious convictions is dismissed merely because of its source. "What is eeded, then, is a willingness to listen," he says, "not because the speaker has the right voice but because the speaker has the right to speak." In this valuable book, Carter leads the reader to contemplate the embattled constitutional wall between the state and religion, and he does so without furor, without dogma, with only the qualities he envisions in the ideal public square: moderation, restraint, respect.

722 Miles: The Building of the Subways and How They Transformed New York
by Clifton Hood
(Simon & Schuster; $25)

NEXT year, the New York subway system will be ninety years old. Hood's history goes back even farther, to review the whole story of transportation in the city—from the horse-drawn omnibus of the early eighteen-hundreds to the horse car (a smoother ride, because the car was on rails), the clamorous, steam-driven Els, and, finally, the electrically powered underground railway. (It will be news to most readers that for a time in the eighteen-seventies small, luxuriously appointed passenger cars were propelled along a short stretch twelve feet below Broadway by a compressed-air blower, which pushed them to one destination, then sucked them back to the other.) Rich merchants conceived the idea of a rapid-transit system that, by extending the city limits, would ease the strangulating congestion of Manhattan's working population; this, the author says, was a "political masterpiece," which eventually resulted in making New York City a commercial world power. Hood clearly describes the staggering engineering problems posed by New York's perverse geology, and he also brings to life the bureaucratic infighting that marked the subway's progress from the beginning, and the long-enduring folly of the five-cent fare, which starved the subway system for years, but which a New York City politician tampered with at his peril. (The fare didn't go to ten cents until 1948.) This account is a reminder that, even now, no comprehensive plan for adequately financing the transit system has been devised.

FROM OUR PAGES

(All or part of these recently published books originally appeared in The New Yorker.)

Across the Bridge
by Mavis Gallant
Random House ($19)

The Great Power-Line Cover-Up
by Paul Brodeur
Little, Brown ($21.95)

The Fountain of Age
by Betty Friedan
(Simon & Schuster; $25)

THE author of "The Feminine Mystique" reports that, just as society's irrational perceptions once confined women to inferior roles, a common misperception nowadays is to regard the aged as less competent—and less valuable—than the rest of the population. Friedan claims that care-giving experts have been horrifying the public by alleging that an enormous number of helpless old folks are in need of special care, whereas in fact no more than five per cent of Americans over sixty-five are in nursing homes. She learned that even the very aged don't always need expensive programs but can flourish with limited, inexpensive services, such as part-time domestic help, where these are available; that old people generally do not find the mild disabilities of age disabling; and that they adjust to the inevitable losses of mates and friends by forming new ties. Friedan chattily piles one fact on another to make her point gracefully and convincingly: people past sixty-five are not defective—they're adults. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

FIELD TRIP

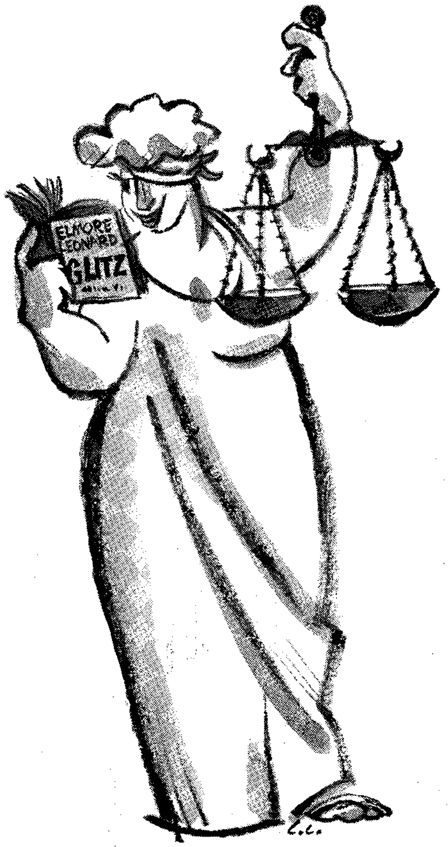
BY JEFFREY TOOBIN

"PEOPLE? *People!*" the guard was saying to the less than attentive group before him in the lobby of the Supreme Court Building. "I'm trying to get some coöperation here!" His charges were a delegation of some of the nation's better-known writers, visiting Washington to attend the annual benefit dinner for the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. Generally solitary in their work habits, writers in groups can tend toward mischief, so the guard had to struggle against a rumble of wisecracks in order to lay down the ground rules: No hats, coats, or note-taking in the courtroom. Thus informed, Amy Tan sheepishly marched off to deposit her dapper, but taboo, bowler in the checkroom.

For each of the past five years, writers invited to speak at the PEN dinner have made a pilgrimage to the Court in early October to watch an oral argument and meet a couple of the Justices. Last week's group consisted of Robert Olen Butler, Ernest Gaines, Barry Hannah, Maureen Howard, Jayne Anne Phillips, Francine Prose, Vikram Seth, Mary Lee Settle, Ntozake Shange, Scott Spencer, Ms. Tan, and Deborah Tannen. The case being argued was a complicated one about voting rights, but several writerly antennae seemed to rise when Justice David Souter started asking questions about what sounded like "Jiggles factors." He was referring to a prior decision, but, to judge from the looks on the faces in the writers' row, the phrase may turn up in a short story sometime soon.

After the argument, the writers trooped into a gray-walled conference room, where they were joined by Justices Harry Blackmun and John Paul Stevens. The sight of the two Justices—who, shorn of their robes, are small men of direct and unpretentious demeanor—put the writers on their best behavior. Then E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr., a lawyer who was serving as host for the event, opened the questions by posing the one on everyone's mind. The answer: When time allows, they read mysteries. Justice Blackmun expressed a fondness for Elmore Leonard, while Justice Stevens proclaimed himself "a Ruth Rendell man." But Justice Stevens hoped to expand his horizon. Prodded by his daughter, he said, he had recently bought Vikram Seth's "A Suitable Boy," and he now asked the author, who was seated in the front row, to autograph it. Mr. Seth, flashing a great half-moon of a smile, obliged.

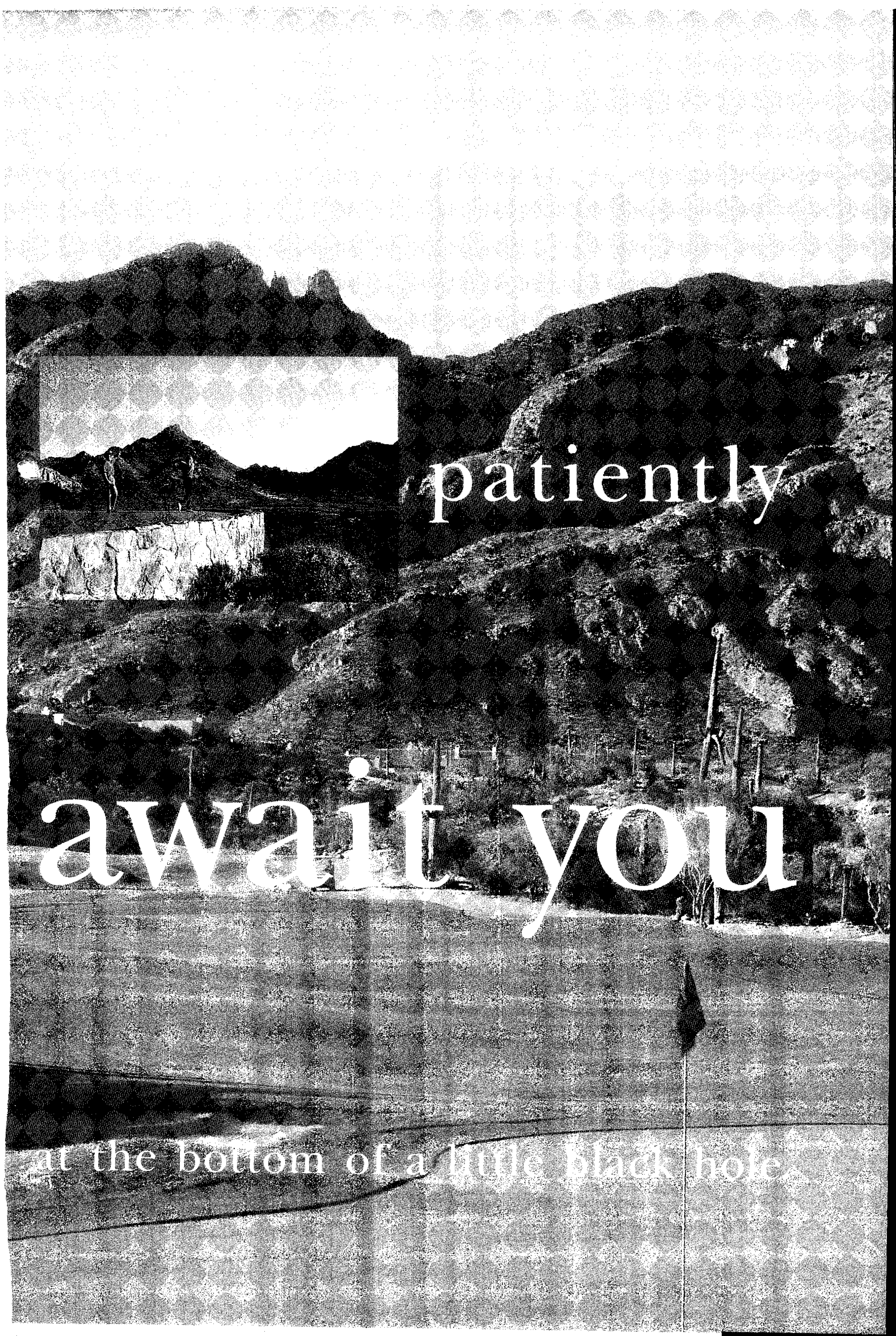
Mary Lee Settle asked about the Justices' memories of their first day on the Court. Justice Stevens got a laugh when he recalled that he had almost rolled his big leather rocking chair off the bench. Justice Blackmun, who, having been appointed in 1970, is now the Court's senior Justice, had a more poignant memory. "On my first day, I walked into the little room where we put on our robes, and standing in front of me in a little semicircle were Hugo Black and William O. Douglas and William Brennan." Moved by the invocation of such names, the authors caught their breath. "And I thought to myself, My God, what am I doing here?"



The afternoon wore on, and the writers turned serious as they struggled to appreciate the burdens of a job that is, ultimately, as solitary as their own. With time for only one more question, Mr. Prettyman called on Ntozake Shange. "When I listen to the radio late at night and hear about how someone is about to be executed, I always hear that the Supreme Court is deciding whether to grant a stay," she said. "I wondered what that is like for you."

"The death-penalty cases are a grisly business, in my opinion, and we get three or four of them a week," Justice Blackmun said. "I've never understood why, but it's almost always in the middle of the night. It must be some tradition that we have about executions. There are always political overtones in these cases. There are always difficult racial issues in these cases. And, to tell you the truth, I'm not very happy with our death-penalty jurisprudence. I've come to believe that it has no deterrence value at all—that it's purely for retribution." He paused, and then added, "But two-thirds of the states have it. I guess it's what the people want."

With that, the writers filed out, and this time no one had to call for quiet. Walking down the great marble steps Mr. Seth recalled that Justice Blackmun had said that the Court never seemed able to settle fundamental issues of righ and wrong. "In a way, I suppose, that i fortunate," Mr. Seth observed. "It keep us both in business." ♦



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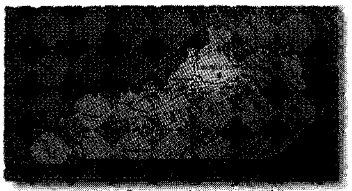

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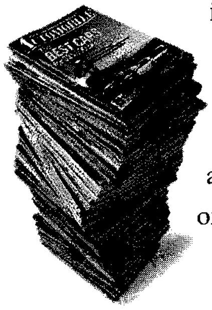

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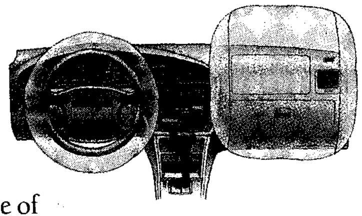

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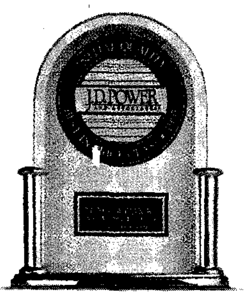

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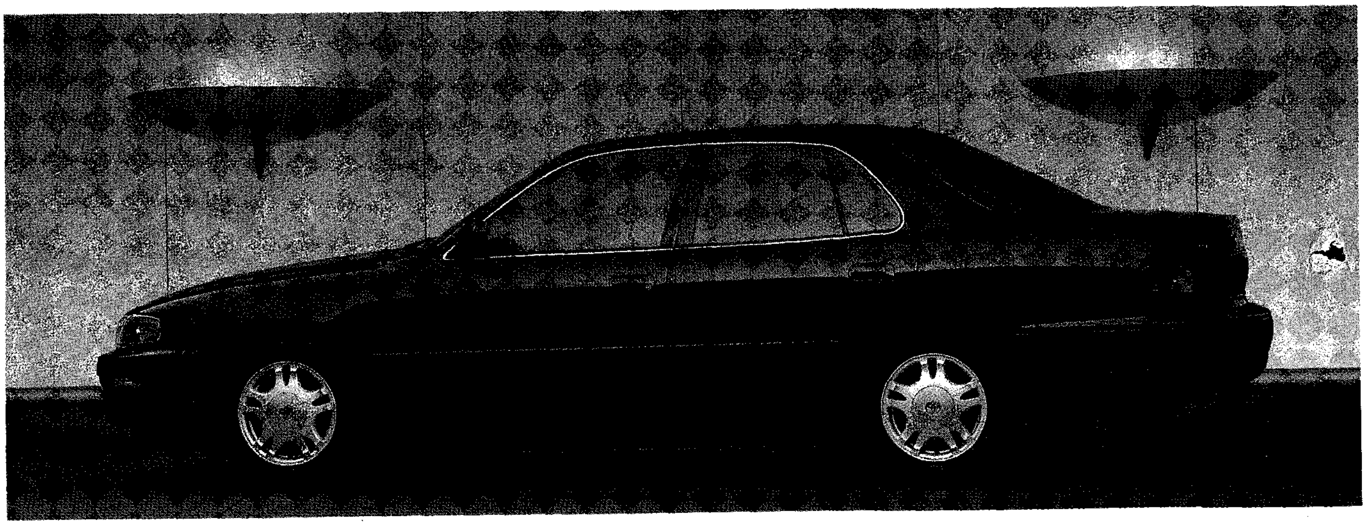

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